

India Now

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This PDF is prepared by Sukhwant Hundal in memory of his father
Shivdev S. Hundal and mother Harbans Kaur Hundal.

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INDIA NOW

Vol. 6 No. 1 January 1983 Monthly News Publication of Indian People's Association in North America

Assembly Elections in Andhra, Karnataka, Tripura on Jan. 5

KISHAN BAJWA

Karnataka, Andhra and Tripura will have elections to state assemblies on Jan. 5. The Election Commission's announcement on Nov. 26 came as a surprise to all except the ruling party. India Today cited sources saying that the Andhra government asked the Commission on Nov. 25 to hold elections on Jan. 5. The elections to Karnataka and Andhra assemblies were not due until March when their terms expire. Both states are run by Indira Congress. The assembly term in Tripura, which is ruled by a coalition led by CPM, expires on Jan. 9. The government has given the forthcoming nonaligned summit scheduled in March in New Delhi, in which Indira Gandhi is going to be busy, as the main reason for early elections in Karnataka and Andhra.

After criticizing the government for not giving enough time for preparation for the elections, the opposition parties in Andhra and Karnataka started vigorous

attempts to unite, which have only been partially successful. The left front coalition led by CPM in Tripura is expected to be reelected though it may face a stiffer fight than the last election from Congress(I)—TUPS coalition. Congress(I) does not have any seats in the present house.

ANDHRA

In Andhra, Telugu Desam leader and film star N.T. Rama Rao, who has been drawing huge crowds, is the strongest contender for power to Congress(I). After the Commission's announcement, he

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Communal Riots Again Flare Up in Baroda

At Least 13 People Killed

Riots between Hindus and Muslims broke out again in Baroda on Dec. 13 night in which at least 13 people were killed and many injured. The situation remains tense; Muslim inhabitants marched to protest against police atrocities. Army units and paramilitary forces moved into the city on Dec. 14 to maintain order. An indefinite curfew was imposed on Dec 13.

The police shot and killed 2 persons and wounded 4. Police sources said that the police fired 37 rounds of ammunition and exploded 10 tear-gas shells before the army was called in.

Baroda had communal riots in October when 7 people were killed and many were injured.

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Supreme Court Says:

Workers Entitled to be Heard on Closure

In a major decision supporting workers' rights, the Supreme Court ruled on December 11 that workers are entitled to be heard in the winding up proceedings of a company.

"It is not only the shareholders who have supplied capital but the workers who supply labor are also equally, if not more, interested because what is produced by the enterprise is the result of labor as well as capital," Justice P.N. Bhagwati said, writing for the majority. The case had been filed by the National Textile Workers' Union and other trade unions of Coimbatore.

Justice Bhagwati said the workers had a right to be heard in such a vital matter like the winding up of a company. This was part of the principle of natural justice, he said. "It is true that the shareholders bring capital, but capital is not enough, here is another important factor of production and that is labor."

Capital is only one of the factors of production and it cannot confer on the owners exclusive domain. While the owners invest only part of their money in the company and bear only limited financial risk and otherwise contribute nothing to production, the workers contribute a major share of the product. The workers invest their "sweat and toil," in fact their life itself.

The majority, consisting of Bhagwati,

O. Chinnappa Reddy and Baharul Islam, also relied on the Directive Principle in the Constitution, which enjoins on the government to secure worker participation in the management of undertakings.

In a strong dissent, Justice E.S. Venkataramiah charged that the court was going too far outside its legitimate sphere. Though worker participation is an ideal set out in the Directive Principle, which the state must take steps to implement through laws, the court cannot take over the function of the legislature. Parliament has not taken any concrete steps in regard to worker participation, the judge pointed out. Many of the directive principles like right to work, raising the level of nutrition, laying down a uniform civil code are yet to be legislated by the government but the court cannot issue a writ to the executive to implement these policies. The only solution for these social problems is to appeal to the appropriate forums of the state to do their job. "It is wrong to think that by some strained construction of law, the court can find solution to all problems," he said. Venkataramiah was joined by Justice A.N. Sen in the minority.

SHAKESPEARE

Justice Reddy began his judgment with Shakespeare: "You take my life when you do take the means whereby I live."

Center Forced to Return Press Bill to Bihar

The protests and marches organized all over India by journalists and others concerned about democratic rights and press freedom had a partial success when the Union Home Ministry decided on December 9 to return the controversial Bihar Press Bill to the Bihar legislature for amendments. Jagannath Mishra's government introduced the bill allegedly to curb scurrilous writing and blackmail, and it was hurriedly passed under a great deal of commotion and confusion on July 31, the last day of the monsoon session of the legislature. The bill provided for arrests

without warrants and jail terms of 2 to 5 years. It was viewed by most journalists as an attempt to muzzle the press.

The bill came to the President for assent before becoming a law soon after it passed. Gandhi's government sat on it for over 4 months before it decided to return the bill. There were indications that the government was initially interested in giving a go ahead, but it later adopted a wait and see attitude. Nationwide protests and criticisms forced the government to return the bill.

Restaurant Workers Strike in New York

By A Staff Reporter

Workers at the Raga restaurant in New York have been on strike since early December. The main issue is the management's refusal to recognize the workers' union. Also at issue is the appropriation by management of a portion of the tips, and other working conditions.

On December 2, 19 workers at the mid-Manhattan restaurant Raga decided to form a union affiliated to Local 6 of the Hotel, Restaurant and Club Employees and Bartenders Union, a member union of the AFL-CIO. The management told the workers that there was no room for a union operating in their restaurant and bluntly warned them that participation in a union would mean their dismissal.

The workers (captains, bartenders, waiters) walked out and have since then been picketing outside the restaurant.

Raga restaurant is part of the Taj group's chain of restaurants around the world (whose important shareholder is the Tata family). One of the fanciest Indian restaurants (if not the fanciest) in New York city, Raga reportedly grosses over \$2 million annually.

As with restaurants elsewhere, the greater part of the workers' income is from tips (wages are \$2.25 to \$3 an hour). But at Raga, the tips are not directly given to the workers but are pooled and kept by the manager till the week-end, when 5% is deducted for breakage;

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Assembly Elections

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responded for the first time to the opposition parties' call for a united front against Congress(I). Rao's talks with the leaders of CPI, CPM, Pawar Congress, Janata, BJP, Lok Dal and Republican Party of India (Khobragade faction) have not led to any electoral understanding. Rao has maintained that electoral adjustment with any party was possible only if Desam was assured of enough seats to win a majority and form its own government. Rao wants 200 out of 294 seats in the assembly, leaving 94 for the opposition, which is not willing to give more than 100 to Rao. Rao claims that the opposition cannot win more than 50 seats.

KARNATAKA

Chief Minister Gundu Rao in Karnataka is likely to get a majority in the 224-seat assembly despite many corruption scandals involving him and his cabinet. After Devaraj Urs's death, no leader of stature has emerged to challenge Gundu Rao. CPI, CPM, Janata and Karnataka Kranti Ranga have reached an agreement on sharing seats. BJP is going alone as in Andhra, fielding at least 120 candidates.

Meanwhile, the list of Congress(I) candidates in Karnataka drew angry reaction from 7 MPs of the party from the state. They charged that it did not contain enough loyalists. Over 100 out of the present 185 Congress(I) MLAs are defectors. The party office received over 7000 nominations for 224 seats, in contrast to 3000 for 294 seats in Andhra. Indira Gandhi had ordered the aspirants not to come to Delhi, but she had to rescind the order as a number of ministers and others rushed to Delhi because the high command had not set up election committees. The idea of the committee was opposed by Gundu Rao on grounds of lack of time.

According to most observers, early elections will benefit Gandhi's party chiefly because the dissidents are caught unawares and they would not have sufficient time to create headaches for the party.



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Architect of Left Front

Promode Dasgupta Passes Away

Promode Dasgupta, senior CPM leader and head of the Left Front in West Bengal, died of a heart attack on November 29. He was in a Beijing hospital, undergoing treatment for asthma when his condition worsened about two weeks before his death. It was reported that besides receiving acupuncture treatment, he held two rounds of talks with leaders of the Chinese Communist Party.

Dasgupta was born in 1910 at Karimpur in Faridpur district, now in Bangladesh. His father was a surgeon. Dasgupta became an apprentice mechanical engineer in a Calcutta Corporation workshop after finishing Intermediate (two years of college). In 1929, he was introduced to terrorists; he organized legal defense for Niranjana Sen, one of the accused in the Mechhuabazar conspiracy case. For this, he was jailed where he became a communist. He produced three issues of a handwritten magazine, Communist. He was released in 1935 but rearrested next year and held in Hijli detention camp till 1942.

In the Calcutta Congress of 1948, Dasgupta sided with Jyoti Basu and Muzaffar Ahmed in their struggle against rightists within CPI. CPM fought the 1967 election on a strategy devised by him, whose major objective was to reduce CPI to obscurity.

When the United Front ministry was formed in 1967, he played a key role in persuading his colleagues to join. He faced a dilemma since joining the cabinet would disillusion his radical followers while his staying out would give more power to the "centrists." He ultimately decided to stay out.

It is thought that Dasgupta wanted CPM not to be too closely tied to the Soviet Union. The Indian Express reported that his talks with Chinese leaders before his death explored the possibility of establishing party-to-party relations.

At last year's conference of the state party, Dasgupta presented a report critical of the national leadership's support to Charan Singh during the period preceding Indira Gandhi's return to power; the report also made authoritarianism the main danger in the country. Shortly thereafter, the national congress at Vijayawada took a different line, closer to CPI's, focusing on right reaction and US imperialism.

As leader of the state CPM, Dasgupta's three major achievements were holding the party together during 1967-70 of the Naxalbari movement and the formation of CPI-ML; holding the party together again during 1972-77 when CPM was in political wilderness, being persecuted by Congress(I); and finally fashioning the Left Front in 1977, which has held together for five years.

"We Are Yet to Gain Freedom," Says Bajaj Award Winner

At this year's ceremonies for the Bajaj award, spirited remarks were made by 86-year-old Gokulbhai Daulatram Bhatt, the oldest of the three recipients.

Bhatt is this year's winner for outstanding constructive work. The other winners are Prembhai of the Banwasi Sewa Ashram for application of science and technology to rural development, and Taraben Mashruwala of the Kasturba Sarvodaya Mandal, Madhan Maharashtra, for contribution to the welfare and uplift of women and children.

Bhatt said he had been a freedom-fighter but this was not the freedom he fought for. "We have not become men, and we have not become free. We look to collectors, tahsildars and patwaris for our salvation," he said.

There was no independence in the country's villages which were ridden with destitution, inaction and disability, he said, before launching into a tirade on his favorite theme, Prohibition.

COMBATING FAMINES

Prembhai said the main constraint to development in rural areas was neither funds nor technical expertise but the proper application of these.

When he joined the Banwasi Sewa Ashram in 1967 as its secretary, his concern was to demonstrate common-sense solutions to the problems of drought and famine in the area.

Every third year there is a drought, every tenth year a famine, he said. "There is no absence of rainfall, but absence of it at critical times," he said. He just got the local people to build eight to ten earthen dams in each village to store water.

Congress (I) Ministry in Nagaland

No party won a majority in the recent state assembly elections in the troubled state of Nagaland. But Congress(I) has formed a government with the help of 8 newly elected independents in the 60-member house. Congress(I) and the Naga National Democratic Party, which controlled the earlier administration, won 24 assembly seats each. So the independents, held the balance of power. S.C. Jamir, former chief minister of the state, was elected Cong(I) leader in the state assembly. A seven-member cabinet headed by Jamir was sworn in by Governor S.M.H. Burney on Nov. 17. In the last assembly, Congress(I) had 24 seats whereas

What people need is not resources but enabling mechanisms, he added. During one critical famine the district administration brought in four sophisticated rigs that could each drill one well a week. The ashram decided a faster solution was needed to dig holes and got simple village teams to dig holes and blast whenever they struck rock. "We had 624 wells in 254 villages in a month's time," Prembhai said.

Govindpur is in the southeast corner of UP, bordering MP and Bihar and is an extension of the Ranchi plateau. The population is predominantly tribal. Over the years more than 6,000 acres of land have been reclaimed here from ravines, a thousand small earthen dams constructed and some 2,500 tribal families benefited by the cultivation that is now possible here.

Under Prembhai's stewardship, flood-proof housing and a three-tier health programs have also been taken up.

MASHRUWALA

Now a frail 72, Taraben Mashruwala is a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi who was nominated by him as the representative of the Kasturba Gandhi Trust for the Vidarbha region in 1946. With a small village called Madhan as her base, she set up Balwadis, schools, health centers and gram sevika training centers all over the region.

The Kasturba Sarvodaya Mandal, which she founded in 1979 at Madhan, runs three maternity homes, a door-to-door health service for village women, and "two-hour schools" for working women and girls.

NNC had a majority with 34 seats.

In the election campaign, Indira Gandhi had urged the people to vote for her party so that the state government thus formed could act in "unison with the center." Gandhi said, "Those states which had chosen the path of confrontation with the center had not only weakened the fabric of nationalism but in the process, their own interests." She "The history of modern India has shown that confrontation does not pay. We have also to see to it that the money for development is well spent and goes to the right people."

Survey Finds Increase in Girl Students

Poor Facilities in Most Schools

According to the fourth All India Educational Survey, the percentage of women students increased throughout most of India during 1973-78. Only in Meghalaya, Kerala, Delhi, Chandigarh, Goa, Daman and Diu, and Andaman and Nicobar islands is the percentage of women students over 45%. Rajasthan has the lowest - 24%.

The number of schools has increased by only 8% and the number of school teachers by 12%. The women teachers constitute 27% of the community - 18% in rural areas and 46% in cities.

The survey found that a fourth of the primary and middle schools did not have any mats or furniture. Only 24% of schools have urinals and lavatories; for the rural schools, the percentage is 18. A large number of schools, particularly the primary schools, do not have any library facilities.

Congress (I) Dissidents Get Bolder in Gujarat & Maharashtra

The ruling Indira Congress is facing revolts in Gujarat and Maharashtra. Five MPs and 9 state legislators quit the party in Gujarat. One of their leaders, Dr. Mahipat Mehta, who used to be the vice-president of the state committee, said that they would hold a convention on Dec 26 when they would announce a new state level party. Mehta also said that they would call for the ouster of the government of Chief Minister Madhavsingh Solanki, which is riddled with corruption. Developments in Gujarat have seemingly encouraged party dissidents in Orissa, which is also ruled by Indira Congress, to call for the ouster of Chief Minister J.B. Patnaik. They are reportedly being encouraged by the union minister of state for chemicals and fertilizers, R.N. Rath.

MAHARASHTRA

In a related development, Congress(I) in Maharashtra suspended 6 MLAs from party membership. The party also warned dissidents that indiscipline would be dealt with severely. The suspension followed a revolt in the state Congress against chief minister Bhosale who was personally picked by Indira Gandhi after Antulay was indicted on corruption charges in relation to trusts that he floated.

Ever since his appointment, Bhosale has faced stiff opposition from Antulay's followers and the party high command has been unable to curb dissidence. Early last week, MP Balasaheb Pawar told reporters that they had a one-point program - Bhosale's removal as chief minister. He emphasized that his followers would not resign from the party but added that they could not help it if they were expelled. According to Pawar, 40 Maharashtra MLAs attended a meeting to call for Bhosale's ouster. According to the Economic and Political Weekly, some of Bhosale's cabinet colleagues are actively involved in this campaign.

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CPI Gen Sec Criticized for Being Too Anti-Indira

At the recent meeting of the central executive of CPI, C. Rajeswara Rao, general secretary, was reportedly criticized for being too anti-Indira, pro-CPM and pro-BJP. According to a report in the Indian Express, one effect of the criticism was that Rao was forced to appoint Indradeep Sinha as chairman of the central journals department. The post has been vacant since the death of Bhupesh Gupta. Another effect was seen three days later, on October 11, when several opposition parties, including CPM, BJP, Janata and Lok Dal, walked out of the Rajya Sabha alleging that the Deputy Chairman, Shyam Lal Yadav, was "deliberately in-

terfering in the proceedings on behalf of the ruling party." The CPI members, including Yogendra Sharma, Indradeep Sinha and Kalyan Roy, did not walk out. The controversy was revived after Brezhnev's death when Rajeswara Rao did not visit Moscow for the funeral.

At the executive meeting, Rao was criticized by Yogendra Sharma and Mohit Sen, as well as by two members of the party secretariat - N.K. Krishnan and Jagannath Sarkar. Many of the leaders have been to the Soviet Union in recent months. Krishnan returned from Moscow just before the meeting.

The executive's resolution welcoming the joint communique by Indira Gandhi and Leonid Brezhnev did not contain a single critical reference to her domestic policies (in contrast to Rao's statement on the eve of Gandhi's visit to Moscow). On the other hand, BJP was criticized along with Jamaat-e-Islami for "doing

their sinister job" in fanning communal violence.

Yogendra Sharma, who has emerged as a known critic of Rao according to H.K. Dua of the Indian Express, was in Moscow recently. On his return, he wrote a letter to Rajeswara Rao questioning his leadership. According to him, the Soviet Communist Party has noted three positive features in Gandhi - her foreign policy, her capacity to maintain national unity and her will to fight right reaction.

The CPSU has been cited as having particularly opposed Rajeswara Rao for sharing a platform with BJP to protest the induction of the Bhajan Lal government in Haryana, for setting up H.R. Khanna as a joint opposition candidate for the presidency, for participating in last year's farmer agitation for higher prices which Moscow thinks will only help kulaks, and for joining rightist trade unions in the prolonged strike in public sector undertakings in Bangalore.

RUSSIAN VIEWS

Meanwhile, a recent article in Asia and Africa Today by Roman Ulyanovsky, a leading Soviet scholar on Indian affairs, asserts that the main danger in India is the "emerging right reactionary alternative to the Indian National Congress led by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi." Since the left in India has been ridden with dissensions and so has been unable to present a united alternative program, "leftist forces should unite with progressive forces to fight the danger emerging from the right. This assumes the highest priority for the development of India." The analysis is essentially the same as has been provided for the past fifteen years or more.

Inner-party struggles in CPI may intensify in the coming months in view of the non-aligned summit to be held in New Delhi in March 1983 when Indira Gandhi will become head of the non-aligned movement.

Assam: Govt Discontinues Talks with Student Leaders

The central government has postponed the tripartite talks between its representatives and those of the opposition and the Assam agitation leaders. The government blamed the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) and the All Assam Students Union (AASU) for this. It was alleged that the representatives of the organizations did not arrive in New Delhi on Dec 6 as scheduled despite arrangements made by the state government.

The leaders of the organizations said that they had to postpone the visit to New Delhi by a day because they could not get the chief convenor of AASU released from the jail. The convenor, Joynath Sharma, was arrested under the National Security Act a few days before the general strike called by the two organizations on Dec. 2. Sharma was allegedly severely beaten by the police and taken to Gauhati Medical College Hospital on Dec 5 for treatment of injuries. He was to be released on Dec. 5 for parole but the jail authorities insisted on detaining him on other charges. The leaders said that it was the center's responsibility to get him released if the center was really interested in holding talks with the organizations.

Earlier in November, the 20th round

of talks between the agitation leaders and the government did not reach any agreement except that the talks would reconvene again on Dec. 6. The opposition parties have participated in these talks for the sixth time. Under discussion is the formula proposed by the Janata MP Ravindra Varma on August 26 for dealing with "foreigners." After the talks, the agitation leaders had announced that the agitation in the state would be resumed starting on Dec. 2 with a 24-hour Assam Bandh.

ELECTIONS POSSIBLE IN MARCH

Meanwhile, the central government has also been putting out feelers to have elections in Assam by March 18 when the President's rule imposed for a year ends. Two earlier ministries headed by Con-

gress(I) leaders Anwara Taimur and Kehsub Gogoi had very short lives. On Oct 21, Indira Gandhi constituted a 15-member election committee headed by Assam Congress(I) chief Harendra Talukdar in anticipation of the polls. Union Home Minister P.C. Sethi confirmed this also. However, on Dec 5, a day before the talks with the agitation leaders were to begin, the government discussed with the opposition leaders a possible amendment to the constitution to allow extension of President's rule in Assam. The opposition had to point out that such a move would hardly help dispel the atmosphere of suspicion surrounding the talks.

The agitation leaders have resolved not to let the elections take place unless the issue of the voting lists is resolved.

Akali Agitation

The leadership of the Akali Dal of Harchand Singh Longowal has refused to resume negotiations with the central government. In his reply to Union Home Minister P.C. Sethi, Longowal said that no useful purpose would be served by sitting at the negotiating table if the government shuts its eyes to facts and goes on harping the same tune. Meanwhile the center recommended the release of 3,000 Akalis who had been arrested in connection with their agitation during the Asian games. During the agitation in New Delhi, Longowal had announced that he would ask all state legislators and MPs belonging to Akali Dal to resign after Dec. 4. Plans were to be worked out for launching a more intensified agitation.

GOVT BLUFFS AKALIS

Many leaders of the Akali Dal are very eager to have negotiations with the center. According to India Today, a few days before the games began, the government initiated a series of steps to keep up the facade that the crisis was on the verge of a solution. PM Indira Gandhi earlier announced that her government had accepted the religious demands of the Akali Dal. This prompted Longowal to say that he was not aware of that; he

urged Gandhi to clarify what exactly she would agree to.

These moves threw the Akalis off balance and lured Badal and Balwant Singh to Delhi. While they waited for an invitation to the talks which never came, the government had already fed a story to the press that an agreement was as good as ready. On Nov. 19, the UNI, the Indian Express and the Tribune reported that T.N. Chaturvedi had flown to Chandigarh with the terms for a package deal. These reports added without confirming from Amritsar that Akali Dal would call off their agitation by that afternoon. The reports also said that Chandigarh would be handed over to Punjab, that the Supreme Court would decide the river waters issue and that a commission would be set up to decide territorial claims.

A special plane was said to have been kept at Palam for Chaturvedi and the Akali leaders. In Amritsar, senior officers of the administration and the intelligence units waited at the Amritsar airport all night. But Badal and Balwant Singh finally flew back to Amritsar by a regular flight. The talks had broken down over procedural difficulties.

DISSENSION IN AKALI DAL

A split in Akali Dal over the election of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak



Policeman firing at Sikh demonstrators

Committee president was averted with the decision to elect Gurucharan Singh Tohra continue in office. The decision followed a representation made by 47 of the 53 committee members to the Akali Dal chief Longowal. The committee controls Rs 1.5 billion.

In another development, Longowal expelled the Delhi Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee president Harbans Singh

Manchanda, and two others from the Dal for anti-party activities. Longowal took exception to their participation in the Nov 26 function in New Delhi where Indira Gandhi had released a set of books. It may be recalled that the late Santokh Singh of Delhi Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee who was shot dead early last year was closely allied to Congress(I) leaders.

Liquor Politics in Kerala

The recent liquor deaths in Kerala were unusual in that the victims had consumed liquor at licensed arrack shops. A study of the economics and politics of liquor reveals that such tragedies are to be expected, given the system.

The deaths took place on September 1 in Vypeen, a small island off the coast of Cochin. No one suspected at first that the deaths could be due to liquor poisoning; the dying victims swore that they had been drinking at authorized shops. The source was soon traced to be a depot

operated by a licensed liquor contractor, a member of the executive committee of the Kerala Congress (Joseph), a constituent of the Congress(I)-led coalition ministry.

The last such incident in Kerala was in April 1981, when a few people in Punalur, 70 km from Trivandrum, died in a similar fashion. The source then was the depot of a licensed contractor who was a leader in Antony Congress, which was then in the CPM-led coalition. Antony has since switched to the Congress(I)-led coalition and recently merged his group into Congress(I).

The state government auctions liquor shops by region; all the shops in one region (112 regions in the state) are auctioned off in one lot. The contractors bid millions of rupees for each region. The bid

amounts have been going up steadily, bearing no relation to the quota of spirits given to the contractor.

Each contractor developed his sources. Arrack is supposed to contain 42.86% ethyl alcohol obtained from rectified spirit. Rectified spirit costs about Rs 12 a liter and so the contractors turn to methyl alcohol, which is only half a rupee a liter. The methanol is chemically treated to reduce toxicity before blending with the rectified spirit. Flaws in the chemical treatment lead to tragedies such as at Vypeen and Punalur. Some observers point out that even when there are no mistakes, the methanol is still toxic, only very slowly.

The money handled by the contractors is so large that many of them are now active in politics. No government has

been able to go after any of them. After the Punalur deaths, the Left Democratic Front government appointed a commission of inquiry instead of pressing the police case. The earlier spirits scandal, relating to the smuggling of spirits from Tamil Nadu (to avoid excise duties), was handled by appointing the Sadasivan Commission in response to opposition demands. That opposition, now in power, has decided not to renew the Commission. The official reason is that there is a Supreme Court stay. According to O.J., writing in the Economic and Political Weekly, the real reason is that the Commission has come up with positive proof linking a number of contractors to the smuggling; each of these contractors is closely connected to one or the other party in the ruling coalition.

Analysis of Baroda Riots

ASGHAR ALI ENGINEER

The nation had still not overcome the shock of the Meerut communal riots when there began the serious outbreak of communal violence in Baroda. Gujarat has by now acquired the dubious distinction of being one of the most communal riot-prone states. In Gujarat, Baroda has a history of communal riots — in 1969 following the riots in Ahmedabad and as late as Sept. 1981.

According to the 1981 census, Baroda has a population of 750,000. Muslims constitute a minority numbering 85,000 (12%) according to the 1971 census.

Muslims in Baroda are extremely poor, except for a tiny minority. More than 85% of them are below the poverty line.

ILLCIT LIQUOR

Until 1977, some Muslims had a monopoly of the illicit liquor business. This business has now been taken over by the Kahars, a Harijan subcaste. One Shiva Kahar is now said to be in absolute command of the business. The business is flourishing. It has been alleged that in Baroda city, liquor worth Rs 100,000 is sold daily and that hafta totaling Rs 6 million per year is paid to police officials and political bosses. Even the politicians of the ruling Congress party are taking a cut in the hafta given by the bootleggers.

Shiva Kahar was arrested in May 1981 in connection with some clashes. However, he was provided with all comforts, including liquor, inside the jail. Alam Shah Diwan, a social worker, lodged a protest with the city police chief in this regard and the then DSP stopped these facilities to Kahar. This is said to have roused the ire of Shiva who swore to take revenge. He was waiting for the opportunity.

POLICE ATTACK MUSLIM MARCH

The latest phase of riots began, according to Deputy Mayor Sayyed Nisar

Bapu, from Oct 22 when a person in Navapura locality was fatally stabbed. It was followed by some sporadic clashes and curfew was imposed. The Muslims decided not to install tazias (imitated version of Imam Husain's tomb in Kerbala, Iraq) in view of the communal tension. However, the home minister of Gujarat, Prabodh Rawal, persuaded the Muslims to go ahead with the tazias and assured them that no harm would come to them.

The Muslims, on this assurance, installed tazias on Oct 23 and strangely enough the police fell upon them on the pretext of breaking the curfew. Either the police did not obey the Home Minister or the Home Minister did not instruct the police to allow the Muslims to install tazias. The police resorted to firing in which 22 persons were injured. Also the police arrested 70 persons of whom 9 were Hindus and the rest Muslims. 56 Muslims were charged under Section 360 whereas the Hindus were released after being taken to the police station.

Tension persisted and sporadic incidents of stabbing, stone throwing etc, continued to occur between Oct 22 and 27 when major violence broke out. The tazias procession was taken out by Muslims on the 27th. When it passed through Lal Akhara, a Maratha locality, dead bodies of two Muslims were discovered there. Tension gripped the city. A fresh bout of violence began from Oct 29. The authorities decided to call out the army, which remained a silent spectator.

Shiva Kahar was waiting for an opportunity to take revenge. Bahucharwada is his stronghold. Every Muslim hut in that area was destroyed. In fact some high caste Hindus tried to help the Muslims. They began to phone the police which asked them to remain silent. Then their telephones went dead. After the opera-

tion for demolishing the Muslim huts began, the lights in the locality also went off. It is alleged that this was done deliberately.

POLICE BRUTALITY

When the Muslims went to lodge complaints, they were detained, which happens in all the riots. On Oct 29, in Nalbandwada in the Mughalwada locality, a Hindu was stabbed fatally. The police now entered the Muslim areas and began to terrorize the people systematically. Muslim leaders allege that earlier 5 Muslims had been stabbed but the police did not arrest anyone. Now it went on the offensive. The SRP here played the same role as the PAC did in Moradabad and recently in Meerut.

The Muslims say that the young males were special targets. The knees and elbows of many of them, who drive rickshaws, were broken rendering them crippled. Some of the victims of the police wrath said the Muslims were called out of their houses and told, "show SP Saheb how you pray." When the Muslim performed Sajda (prostrated themselves) one police jawan would trample the Muslim's hands under his boot, another would put his boot on the Muslim's neck and yet another would rain lathi blows on the Muslim's back. Many victims told this writer the same story. All this, the Muslims allege, to take revenge for the murder of a Hindu.

According to a report in India Today, even police officers do not deny that youths were mercilessly beaten up, saying that a large number of policemen, particularly SRP personnel, have been traditionally biased against the minority community.

CONG(I) PANEL ACCUSES ITS LEADERS AND POLICE

In its report, a 6-member panel appointed by the Gujarat Congress(I) state

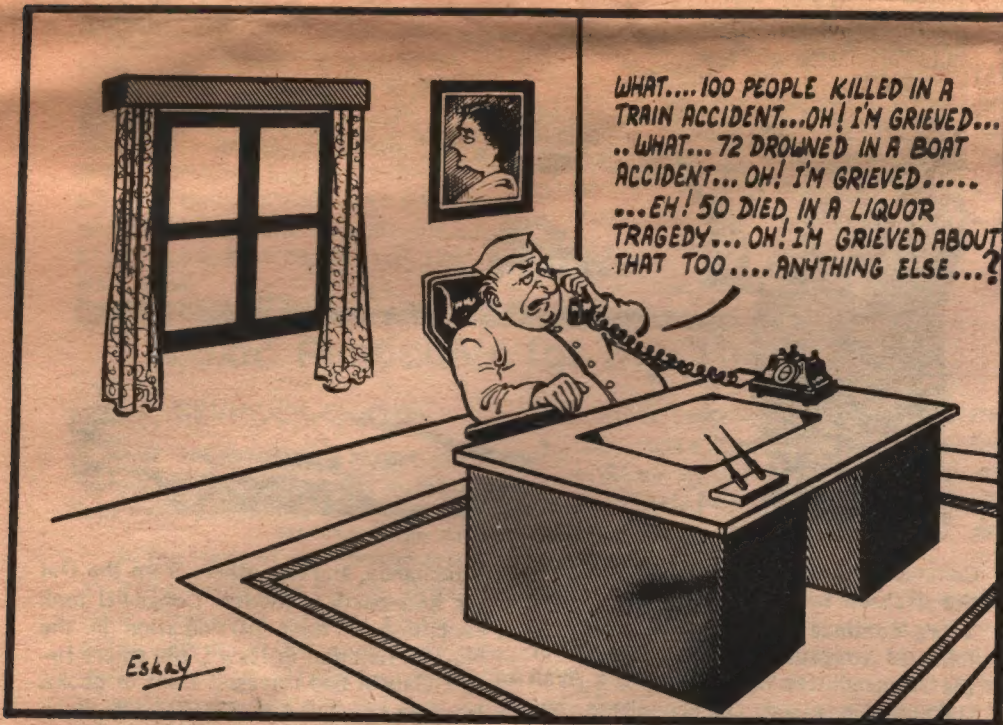
committee president to look into the riots, charged that ruling party politicians and police officers had taken sides during the riots. The report said that several police officers actively aggravated the riots and charged that "some of our own people are also responsible for this situation." Among those named was a prominent Baroda Congress(I) leader who was "patronizing a certain number of groups of bootleggers and anti-social elements to collect easy money." The leader was supposed to ensure immunity from police action for some bootlegger groups while others were "curbed ruthlessly."

STATE GOVT SILENT

Chief Minister Solanki would not visit Baroda. A high level delegation of Muslim MPs and others led by the Indian Union Muslim League met Indira Gandhi on Nov 3. It was only then that Solanki visited Baroda.

The Baroda riots can hardly be called a communal riot in the traditional sense. Everyone we talked to maintained that the acknowledged communal parties and organizations had no role to play in this conflict. Neither was any political or religious issue involved. There was no dispute about the procession of tazias or even of this route. Unlike some other riot-prone towns, Muslims of Baroda do not even have political ambitions. According to Ghulam Dawood Memon, secretary of Baroda city Congress(I), there are no Muslim MLAs or MPs there. Out of 60 councillors in the municipal corporation, only 7 are Muslims, 6 from Congress(I) and 1 independent. Only the deputy mayor is a Muslim. Out of the 7 Muslim councillors, 5 have resigned in protest against the police excesses against Muslims. The two who have not resigned are not from affected localities.

(from Econ. & Pol. Weekly)



The Views of J.R.D. Tata On Planning, Science, Education

[We have carried in the past the views of leaders of mass organizations, politicians, economists, intellectuals, judges, etc., on India's development since independence and the problems facing our society. Followings are some excerpts from an interview J.R.D. Tata gave recently to India Today on the 50th anniversary of his flight in 1932 from Karachi to Bombay. Tata controls one of the two largest private industrial empires in India with 1981-82 sales approximating Rs 26 billion. — Ed.]

DEVELOPMENT

In the past 30 years we have spent Rs 1500 billion on development expenditure alone and what results are there to show for this? There has been progress on some fronts but by and large poverty is as great as it ever was.

SCIENTIFIC MANPOWER

The claim that we have a huge reservoir of scientific manpower is bogus, it is complete bullshit. The third largest scientific manpower is in Japan, not in India. What we do to delude ourselves is to include all babus, watch and ward staff, accountants, clerks and others working in our scientific establishments just to raise the figure. It is time this myth is exposed. Even the 6th 5-year plan document admits that the figure is exaggerated. They state that we have no reason for complacency on this score because as a percentage of our population, our scientific manpower force is smaller than all developed countries and even smaller than some underdeveloped nations.

GOVT SALARIES

Today, the top civil servant in the

Vinoba: A View

The death of Vinoba Bhave has, as was to be expected, produced a spate of pietistic obituaries about the manner of his life, the substance of his actions during this long life as well as the manner of his death, though each one of these raises disturbing questions.

Vinoba Bhave came to public attention after independence, during his intervention in the agrarian revolt led by the Communist Party in the former princely state of Hyderabad, when he introduced the concept of bhoodan and later gramdan, sampattidan and jeevandan. The movement was able to achieve little by way of redistribution of land or other assets and wealth but official circles admit that along with the police and military measures taken to defeat the peasant struggles during that period, Vinoba Bhave's spiritual intervention too considerably helped in bringing the peasant unrest under control.

If he had merely been a straightforward godman — there are so many of them operating in the country that one more or less would have been of no consequence — his doings would not have merited much notice. But he was also

very much a political acharya, the Sarkari Swamy, and made important interventions at moments of political crisis. His observations when the Emergency was imposed, as well as the period of self-imposed silence that followed, the break with Jayaprakash Narayan, or even the periodic threats to engage in a fast unto death in order to force the government to enforce a complete ban on cow-slaughter — these were not spiritual gestures but political acts. The cow-slaughter-ban demand was especially interesting in that the pressure was exerted not on New Delhi but, through it, on the state governments of Kerala and West Bengal, which were already under considerable pressure from Delhi.

No less questionable has been the manner of his death, his so-called decision to wilfully discard his body (samadhi). It was plain and simple suicide. And yet, while even medically sanctioned euthanasia is illegal and a punishable offense, the government and political leadership seem to have been hushed into reverential silence at the gruesome death-watch.

(from Econ. & Pol. Weekly)

country gets Rs 3,500 which is a lower figure than was paid to government employees 100 years ago, when the rupee was 30 times what it is today. A judge of the high court has come down from Rs 4,000 before independence to Rs 3,500 today with the rupee 1/16th the value it was.

The obvious consequence of putting massive economic power in the hands of officers at all levels and giving them starvation wages is that you will have large-scale corruption. You have created a strait-jacketed economy of controls and permits and you pay officials salaries on which they cannot survive, cannot school

their children, cannot plan for retirement, cannot ever hope to own a house and what is the consequence?

EDUCATION SYSTEM

There has been a lot of progress in our educational system but in what direction? We have created millions of semi-educated people but we have no jobs to offer them. Today when young men or women come out of school or college they know that they will not get a job. So you have created a situation where everybody who can manage it wants to go abroad and study, and the vast majority of them don't want to come back since there is nothing for them to come back to.

House of Lords to Hear Turban Ban Case

Three law lords in the House of Lords in England, sitting as Britain's highest court of appeals, are to consider the case prompted by a school ban on a Sikh schoolboy wearing his turban. Lords Scarman, Brightman and Templeton overturned an earlier court of appeals decision, which had barred the appeal being heard at the House of Lords. The lords instead declared that the house should consider the case because it was a matter of public interest. Scarman said that there was a point of law over the meaning of the word ethnic in the act.

Three judges headed by the now retired judge Lord Denning had unanimously ruled on July 29 that Sikhs were not a

racial group and hence not covered by the 1976 Race Relations Act. The ruling came during the hearing of an appeal by the Commission of Racial Equality, a government sponsored body, in the case of Seva Singh Mandala vs Park Grove School in Birmingham. Mandala's son, Gurinder, was denied admission to the school unless Gurinder cut his hair short and stopped wearing a turban on grounds of strict uniform code followed in the school.

The ruling had been protested by Sikhs, other minorities organizations, church and civil rights organizations as well as by sections of the media.

Red Tapism in Immigration Costs Life

Red tapism in Canadian immigration has been blamed for the death of his wife by an Indian born Canadian citizen. Samar Parmanik, a 27-year-old Calgary-based engineer, got married to 23-year-old Phalguni in India. When he wanted to return to Canada with his wife, the Canadian High Commission in New Delhi told him that he would have to go back to Canada and apply to sponsor his wife as an immigrant.

Parmarmanik told the Toronto Star, "I do

not know the immigration regulations. I did what they said I had to do. I left her behind. Months dragged on. She was writing me letters how she was alone and very depressed. She was getting sick."

Phalguni died within a week after being admitted to a hospital in India for a kidney problem. Parmanik had apparently informed Immigration of the problems his wife was having. Parmanik said, "I blame immigration. she would have been alive if they had let her join me."

An Indian Story Screened at Stony Brook

On December 18, IPANA members at the State University of New York at Stony Brook organized a showing of the documentary, An Indian Story. Suhasini Mulay, the film's producer, and Tapan Bose, the director, briefly introduced the film. Sixty people, mostly students at the university, saw the film and participated in the long discussion that followed.

An Indian Story documents the blindings inflicted by police on prisoners in Bhagalpur, Bihar. It also describes the situation in both Gaya, where landless peasants are fighting to cultivate land, more than 10,000 acres of it, controlled

by a religious matt (see separate story on the movement).

The film deals with the issues of human rights and civil liberties in post-independent India, and attempts to show the links between the power and brutality of the police and class and caste rule, particularly in Bihar. The blindings, which took place during 1979-80, were exposed in the Indian press by the magazine Sunday and the Indian Express in late 1980. The film was made in 1981. It was cleared for release in 1982 only after a long and protracted legal battle, and won special mention at the Leipzig Film Festival, 1982.

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We are a small group of people experimenting with building an alternative literature network in Telugu. (Did you know that Telugu is the second most widely spoken language in India?) A non-profit organization just a little over two years old, and manned largely by volunteers, our books are:

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—by S. K. Reddy
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4. ఎడతరాలు (Edutaralu)
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—by Mahasweta Devi (Bengali)

Some of our forthcoming publications include Lenin, Mao & Ecology for beginners, an anthology of Dalit short stories (Marathi). What is history — by E. H. Carr, Ancient India, Medieval India & Modern India — by Romilla Thapar & Bipin Chandra Earth by Emile Zola and a few original Titles

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INDIA

PETITION

Dual Citizenship for Overseas Indians

The President of India
Raj Bhavan, New Delhi.

Your Excellency:

We the undersigned maintain that the present government of India policy, requiring people to give up their Indian citizenship if they adopt citizenship of another country, is unfair and needs to be changed.

Indian citizens living abroad are often forced to take up citizenship in the country of their residence for certain job opportunities and other forms of security. Despite this they continue to regard themselves as Indians. They retain strong social, cultural, economic and nationalist ties with the land of their birth. Wherever they are, they strive hard to preserve Indian culture and traditions and their own identity as Indians. They are interested in the social, economic and political events in India and would like to participate, many actually do, in the development process of the country. They send large sums of money to their families and relatives, thus contributing to the foreign exchange reserves of India. Despite all this, by the government taking away their Indian citizenship, they are forced into the category of "Foreigners."

Many countries around the world, including India's neighbors Pakistan and Bangladesh, allow their people to retain citizenship of their motherland, even if they become citizens of other countries.

In view of the above, we appeal to you to change the present policy so that:

PEOPLE BORN IN INDIA OR OF INDIAN PARENTS DO NOT LOSE THEIR INDIAN CITIZENSHIP WHEN THEY ADOPT CITIZENSHIP OF ANOTHER COUNTRY.

Name

Address

Please return petitions to the Indian Peoples Association in North America, Box 69646, Station K, Vancouver BC, Canada V5K 4W7.

B.C. Govt Cuts Childcare for Immigrants

The provincial government of British Columbia has terminated childcare facilities for the children of immigrants attending English language and citizenship training programs. The BC Organization to Fight Racism has protested the cuts. Charan Gill, president, said the cuts will be "totally devastating to those affected."

Gill called the decision "institutional racism, practiced in a very indirect manner." He said it will affect about 3,000 British Columbians, mainly from third world countries, who make use of the day-care facilities.

Education Minister Bill Vander Zalm, whose office was picketed by BCOFR on December 4, said Gill's accusation that the cuts represented institutional racism was "garbage." Vander Zalm said families of parents attending the language classes should handle their relatives' child care. "I had to learn English on my own

when I came here, as did all my family."

Gill said that the minister doesn't understand the plight of the average immigrant. "Not every immigrant will be rich. Not every immigrant will become a cabinet minister," he said.

Those hit hardest will be women immigrants who will be further hampered in their ability to make contacts outside the home, find employment or continue their education, according to Gill. "The cutbacks will make sure immigrants remain in low-paying jobs such as janitorial or farm work and will deny them an opportunity to advance or even communicate with their own children once they start school."

Funding for the program in the 1981-82 school year was \$104,000, Gill said, a fraction of the annual provincial education budget.

Restaurant Workers Strike in New York

(continued from page 1)

another 5% to pay for credit card commissions; 7.5% for the kitchen staff; and the rest of the amount is divided among the workers, the hostess, assistant managers and manager too!

According to Labor Department guidelines, "An employer-imposed compulsory tip pooling arrangement violates Section 196-d, the Tip Appropriation Law."

A spokesperson for the group cited their earlier experience a few years back when some members trying to form a union were summarily dismissed (but on appeal to the National Labor Relations Board were given full compensation with jobs).

The spokesperson added that what they were asking for was their right to retain their own money (tips). The right to form a union is a basic and fundamental right of every worker in the United States. It was amazing that this highly profitable restaurant would not allow its workers to have a union and in essence have some security in life.

The spokesperson said the workers had in good faith returned to work on December 10 but the management told them it had permanently replaced 15 people and need only four more (to be chosen without regard to seniority).

The workers have now appealed to the National Labor Relations Board against violations of labor laws by the management.

Meanwhile the management has been able to get some people from India (with doubtful legal working rights) and from its other local restaurant, Shamiana (while the predominantly non-Indian unionized workers of their remaining restaurant have refused to come to Raga to work) to carry on with its business.

The striking workers, on the other hand, standing in the cold, unemployed (some have children) have been appealing to customers to boycott the restaurant, their other appeals to media like Vision of Asia having fallen on deaf ears.

Attenborough's Gandhi Gets Mixed Reviews

"Gandhi," the film directed by Richard Attenborough, had its world premiere in New Delhi and the movie was praised by many in the audience including Rajmohan Gandhi, Mahatma Gandhi's grandson, and Coretta King, widow of Dr Martin Luther King who drew inspiration from Gandhi's writings. Film critics of Hindustan Times and Indian Express praised the film, but some other journalists in a press conference said that the movie did not adequately portray the Indian independence movement against Britain and that it did not adequately represent other fighters for Indian freedom. Attenborough responded to this criticism by saying that the movie was about Gan-

dhi and not about the independence movement.

When the production of Gandhi was undertaken by the British director and when the Indian government decided to contribute 7 million dollars towards the production, many Indian writers had criticized the government for encouraging a foreigner with so much money.

The film, which has been dubbed into Hindi, is scheduled for commercial release in India next month. The English version opened in the US a few weeks ago and has been widely acclaimed by various film critics.

New Festivals in Assam Progressive Nationalists Honored

A number of new festivals have made their appearance in Assam in recent years, especially since the nationalist agitation began three years ago. Two of them honor nationalists who were also communists.

JYOTI PRASAD AGARWALA

The death anniversary of Jyoti Prasad Agarwala, a modern Assamese poet and dramatist, is celebrated on January 17 as Shilpi Divas or Artists' Day with public meetings, literary and cultural competitions and programs. Jyoti Prasad descended from a Marwari who migrated to Assam in early 19th century and married an Assamese woman. Jyoti Prasad was active in the 1942 movement and later became sympathetic to the underground Communist Party. He was the president of the Assam branch of IPTA when he died in 1951. He is popular as a writer of revolutionary songs.

BISHNU PRASAD RAVA

Since 1981, the death anniversary of Bishnu Prasad Rava, Jyoti Prasad's younger contemporary and more outspokenly revolutionary poet and artist, has also begun to be celebrated on a large scale all over Assam. Bishnu Prasad was an underground fighter of RCPI in the late forties and was a staunch Assamese nationalist as well. He was paraded in chains through his native Tezpur by the government during the 1962 border war with China. He has become so popular that in 1981 even Congress(I) held a Rava day celebration.

BOHAG BEDAI

The biggest national festival in Assam is Bohag Bihu, celebrated in mid-April. It is a community festival, with feasts, songs and dances. A new feature seen only recently is the celebration of Bohagi Bedai (farewell to the month of Bohag) with public meetings, competitions and cultural programs. The aim presumably is to bring the community together.

SHANKERDEV TITHI

The latest addition to the festival list is the celebration of the birthday of Shri

Shankerdev, the 15th century Assamese Vaishnavite reformer and religious teacher, revered as a saint by Assamese. Of interest is that while the religious observances such as prayer-meetings are there, the main part of the program in 1982 consisted of public meetings with invited lecturers, seminars and discussions on the social and cultural role of Shankerdev, public processions and staging Shankerdev's plays.

(from Econ. & Pol. Weekly)

Gold for Adharshila at Mannheim

Adharshila, a Hindi film directed by Ashok Ahuja and starring Naseeruddin Shah won a gold medal at the 31st Mannheim film festival in West Germany. The film depicts the problems faced by a young director who is not interested in making run-of-the-mill movies and wants to make socially relevant films. It was one of 40 entries from various countries to the week-long festival.

Gauhati Forum on Films

The new Indian cinema is having its impact on far corners of the country, especially since the "new" films are being made in many regional languages. A recent instance of this impact is the formation of the Forum for Better Cinema, launched in Gauhati in July. The Forum seeks to show the better films produced in the country and also generate meaningful discussions of them.

The Forum organized a week-long film festival from August 6 to 12. Several films were shown and a seminar held on "Indian reality and Indian cinema," along with a discussion on Akriet by Amol Palekar. The films included Imagi Ningthem (Manipuri), Aakaler Sandhane (Bengali), Ganga Chilanir Pakhi (Assamese), Kafan (Hindi-dubbed version of the Telugu Oka Ori Katha), Hindi films Bhumika, Bazaar, Chatrabhang, Satish Se Uttha Aadmi, and documentaries Waves of Revolution, Time to Rise and An Indian Story (the first two by Anand Patwardhan and the last by Tapan Bose).

(continued on page 9)

Indian Films to be Shown in France

Ninety-two feature films and 20 short films will be shown in March-April at the Festival of Indian Films at the Georges Pompidou. The highlight of the festival will be the films of five Indian directors, Ritwik Ghatak, Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, Shyam Benegal and Aravindan. Seven films of Ritwik Ghatak will be screened, including Nagarik, Meghe Dhaka Tara and Ajantrik. Ray's retrospective will have 14 films including the Apu trilogy and his two latest movies for television, Sadgati and Pikoo. Eleven films of Mrinal Sen will be screened, which will include Bhuvan Some, Mrigaya, Ekdin Pratidin, Aakaler Sandhane, and his latest, Kharij. Benegal's retrospective will consist of 8 films including the recent Kalyug and Arohan. Among seven Aravindan films to be screened are Uttarayanam, Thamp and Pokkuvayil.

Other feature films have been divided in 3 sections: the new Indian cinema, popular Hindi films and Indian historical, much like the format of the Films India festival at the Museum of Modern Art in New York last year. In the first section, films like Chomana Dudi, Bhavni Bhavai, Aakrosh, Sara Akash, Kodiyettom and Oppol will be shown.

The 20 short documentaries will focus on India's performing arts, paintings and archeology.

The prints of the films are being specially subtitled in French for the festival.

The festival is being organized by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in collaboration with the Pompidou center.

Children Without Childhood

According to the International Labor Organization's (ILO) statistics for 1977, India has the largest number of child laborers in the world. Such labor accounted for nearly 7.4% of its child population. Government estimates put the number of child laborers at 15 million but according to S. Gurupadaswamy, chairman of the National Committee on Child Labor (NCCL), it was around 20 million in the late 1970s. ILO very recently estimated it at 16.5 million. In any case, the number of child laborers in the country is much higher than the total workers in the factory sector.

The age at which Indians start working is little known. However, a recent survey in Bombay showed that 25% of them began work between the ages of 6 and 9; 48% had started between 10 and 12; and 27% between 13 and 15.

MATCH FACTORIES

The cruel exploitation of child labor in the match factories at Sivakasi in Tamil Nadu is probably the most glaring and horrifying. As a newspaper report says, the emergence of hundreds of tiny match-making units in the villages from where the labor force was traditionally drawn has compelled the older and more resourceful units to look further away for their requirements of child power. Some employers transport children to the work spots from as far as 25 miles each morning. Packed buses empty their cargo of half-asleep children outside the factories long before the crack of dawn. Some of them are dragged out of bed as early as 2 AM as the buses have to do more than one trip. By 6 AM when the gates of the match factories open, 40,000 to 45,000 children will have assembled. They put in 11 to 13 hours to qualify for piece-rate payments, found by a government commission, to range from 50 paise to Rs 2.

At a factory outside the municipal limits, one found a toddler being initiated into wage earning. "He just came with his mother to see the place," said the factory owner. She (mother of the boy) sat in another part of the hall, filling boxes. Malnourished children, most of them girls, squatted on the floor in rows, filling frames. The youngest of them appeared to be not more than 4 years old. By filling

2,500 flints sufficient for 50 matchboxes, each of the children will qualify for a payment of 13 paise.

The only permanent employees are foremen and a few adult mates. Everyone else is on piece rate. Collective bargaining is unknown. Nor does anybody think of a trade union.

While leaving a factory, the newspaper correspondent saw a supervisor kicking a girl for breach of his strict code of discipline. "The supervisor is a terror," said an official. According to a recent ILO report, about 28,000 children, some of them only 5 years old, are working in match factories in India for 16 hours a day from 3 AM.

ASSORTED JOBS

In Bombay, children work along with their parents, "digging earth, carrying mortar, preparing and removing the debris, straightening, cutting, bending and shouldering iron rods."

In Calcutta, thousands of children, owing to the poverty of their parents, are forced to toil in binding works, tea stalls and restaurants, and unregistered factories for 10-12 hours a day. These institutions employ children for hard labor and the incidence of their employment in West Bengal is alarmingly high. In Meghalaya, children work in mines of private companies, in trenches 3 feet wide and over 3 feet high where adults could only crawl. As soon as their size is no longer profitable, they are "thrown on the streets."

In Mandasor district of MP, 1000 children presently work in the State's slate mines; they are employed illegally under bonded labor conditions. Most of the children in the mines are victims of silicosis, caused by inhalation of the flying dust emitted by the electric saw while cutting slate pencils.

More than 32% of the working boys and 34% of the working girls are engaged in manufacturing industries which put restrictions on the employment of children below 14 years of age. This violation of law is normal practice in India's manufacturing industries.

(from Frontier)

The Wheels

HARI SHARMA

Be patient.
A few more strikes and it will be done.
This wheel.
You could then fill it up. With air.
You could then put it together.
And it will move you. Your vehicle.
Fast. As fast as you could make it.
Yes, I fix wheels.
Day in, day out, every day.
So the wheels keep moving.
You keep moving.
History keeps moving.
But you still can't move as fast I do.
History cannot move as fast as I do.
For each year, you have to go through
all its months.
For each month, you have to go through
all its days.

For each day, all its hours.
And each minute of each hour.
Every second of the minute.
You have to go through all of it.

I skip whole epochs.
Epochs of my life.
Like my childhood.

The books, the slates, the kites, the fights
The marbles, the butterflies, the smiles.
The cuddles of mama, the strokes of papa
I skipped all of it.

And in some years when I will be young,
I'll be old.
I will have skipped one more epoch.
My youth.

No, you cannot move as fast as I do.
History cannot move as fast as I do.

I fix your wheels.
Who has fixed mine?



Starving Santhal tribals, who have been facing the worst famine since 1967, are beginning to take up arms against the establishment. A number of guerrilla squads have been formed in the hills and jungles of the Santhal Parganas. These extremist groups which include young men and young women, aim at liquidating what they describe as "foreign elements" in the administration and society. The tribals feel that their living conditions cannot improve unless these foreign elements are liquidated or at least sent back to their own areas.

According to Siby Soren, MP from Dumka reserved constituency, and Suraj Mandal, MLA from the Poraiahat constituency, over 200,000 people from seven districts of Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas were scheduled to march in Patna in mid-November to demand relief and aid.

From Gaya I took a bus to Dobhi and from there a rickshaw to the village of Pipparghatti, situated in the Sirghatti block of Gaya district. I was on my way to study the Bodh Gaya land struggle initiated by the Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini.

A breeze lifted, abating the afternoon heat. Walking down the dusty beaten path that led to the village, I was informed by whomever I met on the way that Didiji, a Vahini activist, was working in the fields. Past the guava grove, mud huts, tethered animals and dung heaps in the Harijan quarter, on the outskirts of the village were the fields where the half-bent forms of workers could be sighted. It was there that I found Anjali in knee-deep muddy water, transplanting rice. She was at work with a group of women, their nasal voices lifted in a song.

Twenty-six-year-old Anjali is a full-time member of the Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini, a youth group launched by Jayaprakash Narayan in January 1975 to translate his ideas of total revolution into action.

For the last four years, Anjali and her colleagues in the Vahini have been engaged in organizing the landless Harijans in 40-odd villages in Gaya district. They have set up Mazdoor-Kisan Samitis to spearhead the struggle for the distribution of 10,000 acres of land held illegally by the Bodh Gaya Math, a monastery belonging to the Arya Shankaracharya sect. Though it has been established that this land is being held by the math, the biggest landlord in the area, in excess of the Ceiling Act, the government has not seized it. These benami and farzi lands have been registered in the names of gods and goddesses or disciples.

In the absence of government action — the math has powerful political connections — the Harijans, whose families have tilled these lands for generations, decided to boycott them in 1979. In 1980 they occupied and cultivated 2,000 acres. Unfortunately, at harvest time, the police helped the math's goondas to cut 70% of the crop.



Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini activists engaged in a discussion in Bodh Gaya

Starving Santhals Take Up Arms

AMBIKANAND SAHAY

Earlier the police had fired a number of times at tribals demonstrating at a market place in Paljori on Oct 7 and lathicharged 4 days later. The tribals were demanding the declaration of the district as a drought-affected area. They had come from all the 17 panchayats of Paljori block for a peaceful meeting. Five people were killed.

Why did the police fire? The obvious answer is that the police and the administration which had failed to contain the tide of discontent, possibly wanted to terrorize the people.

But their tactics failed. On Oct 11, 4 days after the police shooting, over 25,000 people, mostly tribals, organized a 6 mile march. The demonstrators reached a field near Mission School at Dudhnai at 3 PM and then proceeded to the district

headquarters. But they were stopped on the way. At least 100 people were injured that day in the police lathicharge.

Earlier all routes to Dumka had been sealed. Hundreds of people were stopped on the Bihar-West Bengal border at Mihijam near Chittaranjan. Many others were stopped and detained at Jamtara, Deoghar, Paljori, Jama More, Jarmundi, Hasdia and Godda. Many leaders and legislators were arrested and others managed to escape.

This correspondent met Suraj Mandal in his hideout near Murmala village in Jama block at midnight on Oct 11. He said that the administration had gone mad. "First they refuse to give relief to the famine victims and then they open fire if the hungry people agitate for food," Mandal added that the repression

was worse than that witnessed during British rule.

The police firing on Oct 7 and the lathicharge on Oct 11 had a snowballing effect. Tribals who had nothing to do with the extremists are veering round to their ideology. To a large extent, the grievances of the extremists seem genuine. Officials have been over the years improving their own lot rather than that of the tribals. Relief is scanty in spite of the fact that the district had been experiencing one of the worst droughts in its history. The government's public distribution system has not been of use in the remote areas. Many villages have not received rice or wheat through fair price shops for the past two years.

In spite of repeated appeals, the deputy commissioner of Santhal Parganas, U.D. Choubey, had not taken steps to irrigate the rivulets, ponds and wells. Tribals had to walk 6 to 12 miles to get a pitcher of drinking water.

Bhoomi Andolan in Bodh Gaya

Translating JP's Total Revolution

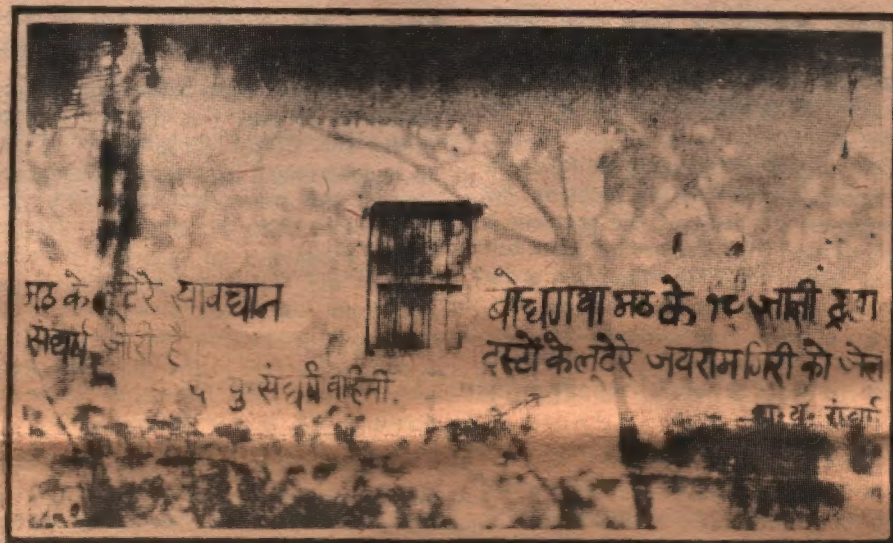
NEERJA CHOWDHURY

Wherever the Mazdoor-Kisan Samiti members resisted, they were beaten up. In order to break up the movement, the math also implicated them and Vahini members in false cases, compelling them to spend their time in running to court. Fighting legal battles requires money, which the Vahini does not have. Neither do the Bhuiyans (a Harijan subcaste). They are so poor that 30% of them still live on roots and leaves for three months of the year.

Sometimes the situation is so acute — as on the day I visited Anjali in Pipparghatti — that these activists do not know where their next meal is going to come from.

For instance, Anjali had resorted to working as a daily wage earner. She was given her 1.25 kg of flour that evening,

in villages has meant learning to go to the has meant sleeping right next to a



Wall graffiti in Bodh Gaya. —Indian Express

fields at 3-4 AM in the absence of toilets for women; being prepared to sleep in the home of a Harijan generous enough to offer her hospitality, though sometimes it tethered animal and the stink of its urine; learning the Maghadi language; risking molestation by traveling alone; and getting used to drunkenness.

The Vahini youth are dedicated; their lifestyle is austere. Theirs is not the ashram or institutional approach hitherto adopted by those attempting to alleviate the suffering of the rural poor. In fact, many "struggle groups" in the country have realized that the oppressed cannot be liberated from a distance. They want to bridge the gap that has existed in voluntary action between the so-called experts or animators — as they are referred to — and the people. Theirs is an attempt to identify totally with the lives of those they are organizing.

The Vahini office in Shekhwara village in Bodh Gaya block is a bare hut where the members sleep on hard and uneven ground. It is from here that they operate. They live alongside the poor Bhuiyans, eating broth made of pounded rice or corn to make it last longer and enduring hunger when there is no money for food; they drink the subsoil water of the villages, and as a result suffer from blood dysentery that constantly afflicts the Harijans; they walk miles in a day from one village to the next, often because there is not enough money for the bus fare; they face the lathis and iron rods of the police and the math's musclemen and are forced to fight countless cases in court as victims of harassment.

They are the cream of our youth — intelligent, well-read and articulate. In careers they would have carved out em-

such groups, the eighties are even more likely to witness an upsurge at the grass-roots level.

Many young men and women have concentrated on transformative politics and organizing the poorest of the poor in various parts of the country. They belong to various hues — from neo-Gandhian to neo-Marxist. Though their ideological perceptions vary, field experience has brought about a commonality of approach. Their aim is to raise the consciousness of the poor, enable them to fight caste and class domination and create a people's power in order to change the socio-economic order that has oppressed and exploited them.

Working with adivasis, Harijans and the landless, they are able to highlight their problems. But by its very nature, their work suffers from being localized. Operating in a micro-setting, they are not able to make a wider impact.

Having challenged the nexus that exists between the landlord, government official, policeman and official, they have naturally come under attack. The State that represents these interests has unleashed repression against them. Many of these groups are now looking to each other for sustenance.

Apart from their need of support, there is also the unresolved question of the political expression of their work. Though the possibility of the emergence of a new revolutionary party from a mass movement created by these action groups seems a far cry at the moment, they are undoubtedly going to affect the direction of the Indian polity. That is why many eyes are hopefully turned to them.

(from the Indian Express)

ECONOMY

BHEL Shunted Aside

Thermal Power with Soviet-British Aid

It has been announced in Parliament that Soviet and British offers to set up thermal power stations have been accepted. Bharat Heavy Electricals, the giant government undertaking which has no orders for 1984-85, has been put aside. The reason given is the availability of foreign credit.

The Energy Ministry lobbied vigorously for permission from the Finance Ministry for the foreign deals since the Planning Commission had allotted only Rs 190 billion for power generation, which would not be enough for 19,000 MW of new power to be set up during the plan period. It was argued successfully that since the Energy Ministry and the various state electricity boards had no money to buy from BHEL, they should be allowed to buy abroad if the foreign sellers were willing to extend credit.

The developed countries are only too eager to extend credit, according to Balraj Mehta of the Economic and Political Weekly, since the present recession has resulted in poor demand for power gener-

ation equipment in the West. The Soviet Union is offering to supply equipment to generate 1,200 MW, while the British are offering 100% assistance to set up a super thermal power station. The Energy Ministry claims that it has already in hand offers of a variety of foreign credits adding up to nearly \$7 billion for installation of 5,000 MW capacity.

There was some reluctance initially in government circles since the credits would lead to a rapid increase in foreign debt. Also, it is believed that credit-financed supplies cost 30-50% more than similar supplies purchased competitively. Thirdly, which projects get carried out may depend on the foreign creditors rather than on what the government wants.

Most importantly, the question is why set up BHEL if it is not going to be used to produce anything.

According to Balraj Mehta, the final decision was made by the Prime Minister's secretariat.

Modus Operandi at HEC

The government-owned HEC is now negotiating with the unions over a new contract. The old one expired at the end of 1981. The government has declared that any wage increase would only be on the basis of higher productivity. The unions say that the workers must first be paid a need-based minimum wage; since the present minimum is no more than half the need-based minimum, no productivity link is acceptable. The unions also claim that the production problems at HEC have to do with management, not workers.

Over the last two to three years, orders placed with HEC have increased but production has not picked up. The main problem is power shortage. To make HEC self-sufficient, a 5 MW diesel generator was acquired from the Soviet Union. It was inaugurated with great fanfare by N.D. Tiwari. While the generator consumes 6,000 gallons of diesel per hour, it does not generate more than 1.5 MW of power. The generator is apparently a very old one.

The pride of HEC is the 6,000-ton press - the biggest in Asia. The press has never worked to its rated power. After barely a decade of use, it is becoming un-

serviceable.

Production planning is reportedly a mess. Many officers are reportedly busy in running other activities in secretly running ancillary units. Further, the officers are split into groups that work against one another. These groups are formed on a regional basis - Bihari, Bengali, Punjabi and South Indian.

RUSSIAN EXPERTS

The Soviet Union demanded and installed a parallel management structure in order to supervise the execution of the orders it had placed. There are Russian experts in every shop and they are the final authority. They supervise not merely the execution of Soviet orders but the entire working of the complex. There are now about 300 Russians at HEC, drawing Rs 3,000-5,000, with almost everything except food and clothes provided free, living in an exclusive area with their own club. Indians cannot become members of this club but can only be invited to functions at Lenin Hall. Some Indian engineers charge that many of the Russian experts may not even have been foremen in the Soviet Union but their word is final at HEC.

Problems in Bengal Forest Conservation

When Mahasveta Devi, the well-known writer, met the adivasis of Singhbhum district, they told her, "When these forests disappear, we will also disappear."

The tragedy of the vanishing forests is not simply an environmental problem. The environmental aspect of the problem is tragic enough, if one remembers that between 1947 and 1980 the area under forests has fallen from 33% to about 10%. But the problem also concerns the existence of an entire people for whom the forest has been a home since time immemorial.

Problems of deforestation are not unique to West Bengal. But one would have thought that the Left Front government would do something to reverse dangerous trends in past policy. But no such steps have been taken; there is a further accentuation of the old policies.

There are two forest regions in West Bengal - one in South Bengal, over West

Midnapore, Bankura, Purulia and a part of Birbhum; the other in North Bengal, covering Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri. Adivasis are concentrated mainly in the Jharkhand region in the south. Nearly half the people here are dependent on the forests.

The main problem is the commercialization of forests. For the last twenty years, the Forest Department of the state government has been auctioning the forests; the policy still continues. The contractors cleared the old type of forests containing sal, mahua and kendu trees, and planted eucalyptus and akashmoni; eucalyptus grows fast and the wood is used for paper. The deforestation is so massive that in the Jharkhand area, where nearly 50% of the land was under forest cover, now it is only 25%.

The old type of forests provided food as well as a source of livelihood for the tribals. The sal fruit and the mahua flower can be eaten. In the lean season, people can live off the roots and tubers. Sal leaves are made into plates and cups and sold. Tribals also collect twigs as firewood. The wood is also used to make agricultural tools. With the destruction of

these old type of forests, the livelihood of the people has been destroyed.

Some areas in the forests, which were good for cultivation, were taken over by the government during the Emergency, declared as forest lands and planted with eucalyptus.

In June 1981, the people of Jhargram demanded the stoppage of eucalyptus monoculture. At a meeting of the Jhargram Development Board (which then consisted of three MLAs, two from CPM and one from CPI-ML), a unanimous resolution was passed urging the state government to stop the auction of forests. While the forests are the property of the central government, the auctions are conducted by the state governments. However, Parimal Mitra, the minister of forests, refused the demand. Mitra belongs to CPM, which opposes the proposed Forest Bill as well as the forest policy of the central government.

In August 1982, the Jharkhand Samyukta Morcha (made up of the Jharkhand Kranti Dal, Jharkhand Party and CPI-ML) launched a mass agitation on this issue. A convention held in Midna-

pore demanded the scrapping of the Forest Bill, an end to auctioning forests for 20 years, an end to eucalyptus monoculture, the right for tribals to collect forest produce, and minimum wages for forest workers equal to industrial workers since forest work is an industry (so far, there has been no statutory minimum wage; as a result of agitation, wages were raised from Rs 5 to Rs 8 a day). According to a correspondent for the Economic and Political Weekly, the agitation is so strong that the state government had to conduct its auctions secretly in September.

The West Bengal government opposes the Forest Bill but only recently the Left Front government signed an agreement with Titagur Paper Mills whereby the total rights of the forests have been handed over to the Mill. Jharkhand Samyukta Morcha feels that an alternative can be worked out to provide raw material for the paper industry without destroying the forests. Eucalyptus can be planted on barren lands or sugarcane bagasse or jute sticks could be used instead to make paper from.

(information from E & P W)

Nirma vs. Surf

Success Story of a Small Business

Karsanbhai K. Patel, a chemist with a BSc degree and a former laboratory assistant at the New Cotton Mills of the Lalbhai group, was working with the department of mining and geology in Gujarat government, but he had plans to set up his own company. In 1969, his dreams became real when he started a company from his office to manufacture a detergent, named after his then year-old daughter Nirma. For 3 years, he went from door to door on his bike on Sundays and whenever he could get time from his regular job, selling his hand-made detergent packets. He was competing with Surf, a product of Hindustan Lever, a subsidiary of a multinational. With years of hardwork and insight into the market, Nirma Chemical Works has now an expected sale of Rs 400 millions in 1982. And, the mighty Lever views Nirma as a tough and formidable competitor. Despite the fact that the Lever has access to modern technology and resources, it has to engage in dirty market practices.

Patel recalls, "At a price of about Rs 3 a kg, Nirma was an instant success. Although I couldn't cover many houses, once I supplied the detergent to a housewife, she became a permanent customer." Patel left his job in 1972 to take up his company business full-time. He found a small shed in an Ahmedabad suburb,

Khokara-Mehmadabad. Nirma was firmly established in Gujarat and Maharashtra after 3 years.

LOWER PRICE

Nirma price is at most 30% of Surf, and 50% of other detergents like Det, Point and Tej. It sells at Rs 6 a kg in contrast to Surf which is Rs 20 a kg. The company uses no power; it started as a one-man operation and continues to run with no electric power and functions as a cottage industry entirely run by manual labor. So, Nirma does not have to pay any excise duty. No expensive ingredients was used either which according to Patel give only a marginal increase in product quality at an extremely steep rise in costs. Further, Patel has policy to limit net profits to 7% of turnover passing the rest of profitability due to ever-expanding operations, back to the consumer. Over the decade of 1972-82, Nirma has gone up from Rs 4 to Rs 6 a kg while the prices of all its competitors have more than doubled.

The washing powder has captured in a decade a hefty 38% of the market in the western region. In contrast, Surf has taken a severe battering along with Godrej Key and Tata's Tej; Surf's share has dropped from roughly 20% to 10%. Nirma which comes simply packaged in a polythene bag that is hand-stapled, had sales of Rs 1 million in 1972, which has now increased by a factor of 400 and in 1985, they are expected to be well above Rs 1 billion. Patel says, "We are still to enter the eastern and southern regions, but already we are selling more detergent powder than any other company if you don't count exports and industrial deter-



Patel outside the Nirma factory

gents. Next year we will make a massive thrust into the east and soon after that into the south."

METHODS

The Nirma company makes a virtue of austerity. Built entirely on internally generated resources, till 1980, it had never taken a loan and even today, its borrowings are restricted to minor requirements of short-term working capital. Overhead is kept to an absolute minimum; only 50 people manage 1000 workers and run the administration. Patel himself is not showy and has a small and simple office. His employees feel free to walk into his office any time, one does not have to make an appointment.

LEVER: MULTINATIONAL STYLE

On July 27, a saleswoman was caught distributing packets of Nirma with a

leaflet carrying Nirma's trademark to Bombay householders in the Pinjapole area by Nirma people. The woman said at the police station that she belonged to the Domestic Research Bureau of Hindustan Lever (1981 sales: Rs 5.2 billion) and had been instructed to distribute these packets and the leaflets to assess the consumers' responses. When the Lever executives were called to the police station, project executive D. Ranganathan who is in charge of the research bureau admitted that his company had got Nirma leaflets printed and distributed Nirma packets for research purposes, which was a violation of the trade mark act. Later, Lever executives explained that they were only working out the response to their new product, Sunlight, which is to be sold Rs 12 a kg as a direct competitor of Nirma. According to Muktesh Pant, the manager handling the new detergent, they had distributed Nirma as a "control" to 900 households for eventual comparison to Sunlight. Later in August, the issue was settled out of court. Lever assured Nirma that they had destroyed the leaflets and the Nirma packets, and undertook not to do this kind of research in the future.

Nirma owner Patel is not convinced that Lever's effort was only market research: "Market research is done with unbranded products without leaflets extolling the features of your product while running down those of others... I suspect this is just part of their campaign to discredit small-scale producers, as they have been doing with the government for the last 3 years."

(Based on a story by Chandar Uday Singh in India Today)

New Uranium Deal — Victory for India

France to Respect 1963 Indo-US Pact

KISHAN BAJWA

After 4 months of negotiations, France has agreed to supply enriched uranium for the Tarapur atomic power plant. Under the accord signed on Nov 26, on the eve of French President Francois Mitterrand's visit to India, it was reported that India will use the nuclear fuel "only for peaceful purposes." France dropped its insistence that it continue to have control over the use of the fuel supplied, even after 1993, when the 30-year contract between the US and India on the reactor ends. Under the agreement, France is to supply each year about 20 tons of uranium hexafluoride, in which fissionable uranium has been enriched to 2.7-2.8%. India will transform the uranium into fuel rods for use in the reactor.

Mani Shankar Aiyer told reporters that the conditions and safeguards of the original 1963 contract with the US would apply to the new arrangement. On the question of reprocessing of fuel, one of



Indira Gandhi with Mitterrand during his Nov. 27 visit

the issues of contention between India and the US, Aiyer referred to the 1963 accord with the US, which gives the supplier the right to buy the spent fuel. According to the New York Times, French foreign ministry officials said that the new accord would require France to lease the uranium fuel instead of selling it

outright.

The agreement is considered a diplomatic victory for India. The French government appears to have dropped two conditions, the so-called pursuit and perpetuity clauses. France was pressing for these clauses in accordance with France's obligations under the rules of the London Club of nuclear powers (barring China), formed in 1978.

The pursuit clause meant that safeguards would apply not only to Tarapur but to other nuclear facilities that might use the Tarapur fuel's by-products. The perpetuity clause meant that the safeguards would apply even after the 1963 agreement expired in 1993. The Nov. 27 memorandum neither explicitly concedes to France the right to invoke the perpetuity clause nor precludes from raising it later. What happens to the spent fuel after 1993 has been left open, a situation very similar to the one with the US government.

Zia Hopeful about Indo-Pak Relations

President Zia-ul-Huq of Pakistan has predicted that there will be a gradual but definite improvement in Indo-Pakistani relations. President Zia, who was in the US for an official visit, was speaking at a luncheon jointly hosted by the Commonwealth Club and World Affairs Council at San Francisco on Dec 13.

In a meeting of the Foreign Policy Association in New York on Dec. 9, Zia suggested that the US government should deal independently with India and Pakistan rather than link its relations with one to those with the other. He added that the US government should work in concert with both India and Pakistan to promote peace in the region. Referring to relations with India, Zia said, "The forces at work in the region demand that Pakistan and India should respond to the new realities by a sincere effort to forge a new relationship founded on mutual trust and confidence."

India's Role in GATT Praised

The role played by India at the ministerial conference on General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, which ended in Geneva on November 29, came in for praise from various delegates.

It was noted that it was the draft worked out by a committee headed by Bhagirath Das, India's permanent representative to GATT, that the conference finally adopted despite demands by some countries to open up the 15-page document.

workers, according to the police, held a demonstration and pledged to prepare for a well-organized strike in the future. From an economic point of view, the strike led to the preservation of the status quo; but it was a great moral victory, according to Karnik: "Workers had compelled the millowners to talk to their accredited representatives and to discuss with them the terms and conditions of their service. As a result, when workers returned to work at the end of the strike, they returned with a feeling of exhilaration and with a consciousness of their own organized strength."

Although the economic struggle with the millowners had not been clinched as yet, the workers' organized strength had grown tremendously. GKK had become a powerful, worker-based body and became within a few months the only effective union left in the field.

Bombay Textile Strike of 1928

As the Bombay textile strike completes one full year, we may recall a similar strike fifty-four years ago. That strike too was in the main over the workers' right to choose their union. The 1928 strike was not an economic victory for the workers but a moral one. The account that follows is based on an article by Georges Kristoffel Lieten in the Economic and Political Weekly.

In May 1928, a major strike broke out in the Bombay textile mills. It was the first industrial conflict in which communists played a role. When on May 22 the Girni Kamgar Union was formed, the executive included Joglekar, Mirajkar, Dange and Bradley. The union had 174 members at the time of registration.

The strike wave engulfed the mill area and within a couple of days more than a hundred thousand were out and stayed out. The Bombay Mill Owners Association initially refused to negotiate. The seventeen demands put forward by the Joint Strike Committee were flatly rejected. The JSC wanted wage reduc-

tions to be canceled, wages for the lowest-paid workers to be raised, standardization of wage scales, phased and negotiated introduction of the double side and three looms system; other demands stressed the responsibility of the mill-owners to deal with the workers collectively through their unions.

The mill-owners, who had a huge quantity of unsold stocks, decided not to budge. Their tactics were to make the strike drag on and to split the JSC. Neither tactic worked. The strikers remained united, even though there were differences within the Workers and Peasants Party, which was the same as CPI in Bombay. Relief work was organized efficiently; particularly with the help of donations from the Soviet Union and from communist groups in England, the JSC was able to defeat somewhat the mill-owners' plan to starve the workers into submission.

Support from noncommunist political entities was minimal. The city corporation council repeatedly refused to give

money for relief work. The Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee contributed an insignificant sum. At a mass meeting half way through the strike, Mirajkar told his audience: "The National Congress is in the hands of capitalists. Not a single thing is done in the Congress for the benefit of the laborers and the peasants. It will be the real National Congress when we enter into it and kick out these leaders."

The strike went on for more than five months, and caused a stupendous loss of workdays. Throughout 1928, 135 workdays were lost per industrial worker. The strike was concluded successfully. The two sides agreed to undo the wage cuts, not to extend the rationalization to new mills, and to submit the demands to a commission of inquiry. The Bombay Strike Inquiry Committee was set up on November 13 with Justice Fawcett as head. In its final report, the Fawcett committee endorsed most of the union's demands.

The most distinct feature was the sense of unity and self-control among the workers. On October 5, the day after the strike was over, more than 20,000 mill

Textile Bonus in Tamil Nadu

Textile workers in Tamil Nadu are agitating against the mill-owners' refusal to pay the same amount of bonus as in past years. The owners say they are not as profitable as before. The state government is backing the owners citing the central government's limits on bonuses.

On November 9, the state government referred the dispute to arbitration and banned lock-outs and strikes pending the tribunal's award. In response, the unions, excepting AIADMK's union, called a one-day strike on November 11. The Joint Action Committee of the textile unions claimed that the strike was a complete success. Official sources confirmed that the strike was total in a majority of the mills, barring a few waste cotton mills and small mills.

There are about 150,000 textile workers in Tamil Nadu (and Pondicherry), represented by eight trade unions — HMS, AIADMK, INTUC, CITU, AITUC, DMK, DTLU and TNTUC. The dispute between the local unions and the Southern India Mills' Association representing the owners is over the amount of bonus. The workers want to be paid according to the formula evolved by SIMA several years back; SIMA wants to abandon its formula and use the Bonus Act. Under the SIMA formula, bonus ranges from 12% to 32%, depending on productivity. The Bonus Act stipulates a minimum of 8.33% and a maximum of 20%.

SIMA's stand is that the mills are losing money and cannot afford any bonuses. In 1980, the forty mills in the state made Rs 162 million as profits but in 1981, the profits were down to Rs 5 million. Even the 8.33% minimum bonus will cost the mills Rs 23 million while the profit is Rs 5 million. SIMA also says that if the mills pay more than the minimum, they will have to pay 60% of the excess as tax since the government will not treat the additional payment as revenue expenditure.

The unions' view is that the SIMA formula was originally devised to improve productivity through modernization of equipment and bonuses; the workers have played by the rules and worked hard. Now it is the mills' obligation to pay the bonus according to the formula. If the mills are unable to sell what they produce, that is the mills' problem, not the workers'. Regarding the 60% tax, the unions point out that the mills in Tamil Nadu have paid more than what the Bonus Act specified for the past sixteen years. The unions say they are not asking for the same amount of bonus as last year, simply the same formula. If what the mills say about their losses is true, the amount of bonus will of course be less this year.

Brindavan C Moses, writing in the Economic and Political Weekly, says the SIMA formula was developed in order to

Forum on Good Films

(continued from page 6)

The seminar discussed such issues as the relation between form and content in socially relevant cinema, the constraints on them and the question of "commitment" of the artist. Seminar participants were mostly film and theater people from Assam itself.

It was felt that even though less popular than the commercial films, the better films did draw large audiences and were becoming increasingly popular, contrary to distributors' fears that such films could only lose money. In Assam, Chakra, Albert Pinto Ko Gussa Kyon Ata Hai and Aakrosh ran to full houses for the few weeks they were screened. In the absence of good films, the commercial cinema is the only cheap form of entertainment, which in turn cultivates a taste for the ingredients that make up a world of illusion.

Amol Palekar visualized his role as sensitizing his viewers to relationships

maximize production in Coimbatore mills when they were modernized. Even during the Emergency, Coimbatore textile workers were paid 11% bonus.

Moses points out that the mills in other regions, even in the South, have not been eager to apply the SIMA formula. Workers in Kerala struck work for nearly seven months for the SIMA formula but

(continued on page 12)

and institutions in society. His films, he said, are a response to the Indian reality, in fact to the specific aspects of the regional reality of oppression, injustice, inequality and individual suffering.

In subsequent discussion, in which the audience participated, there was general agreement that an artist's commitment need not be to a particular ideology but must be to the task of esthetic portrayal of the essence of relationships, experiences and institutions. The artist is expected to offer insights and dispel illusions created by the commercial cinema. In this sense, the artist does have a social responsibility, but no demands can be made on the artist to provide solutions to the situation depicted through the art. For example, Albert Pinto or Manthan, which offer some sort of solutions, need not rate higher than Aakrosh or Chakra, which do not.

Finally, on the question of form and content, it was felt that a lack of esthetic quality reduces a work of art to mere propaganda. Content alone, however relevant, is not a sufficient condition for good art and good film.

The Forum believes that "creative art is the cultural weapon in mankind's struggle to make the world a better world." While the principle "art for art's sake" is rejected, content is not given primacy over form; the esthetic unity of the two, it is felt, gives art its enduring quality.

(from Econ. & Pol. Weekly)

Vidnyan Yatra in Maharashtra

For most of October, a yatra traveled through the towns and villages of Maharashtra. Its objective, like that of KSSP in Kerala, was to spread faith in science and rationality. The yatra was organized by the Maharashtra Lok Vidnyan Sanghataana and the Maharashtra Rationalists Association, with the help of many other groups - Marathi Vidnyan Parishad, Rashtra Seva Dal, Samata Yuva Sanghataana, Krantiba Phule Sanskritik Manch, Samajwadi Yuva Dal, Nehru Science Center, Homi Bhabha Science Education Foundation, Institute of Virology, and so on.

The yatra was able to get official sponsorship. In many towns, the yatra was welcomed ceremonially with welcome arches and processions. According to reports, about one million people saw the yatra in its 3,000-km journey through 45 towns.

The yatra consisted of three groups traveling the same route, following each other by a day or two. The lead group was directed at exposing the miracles of godmen and questioning superstitions and blind faith. The second group gave information on water management, agriculture and appropriate technology, energy crisis, the peace movement and science in war. The third group did science education through models, posters, films and slides. Padma Prakash, writing in the Indian Express, found the first group the best. The third group's materials were mostly in English and did not appear to be particularly enlightening.

MIRACLES

The lead group was led by B. Premanand, an ex-industrialist and rationalist from Kerala. The group performed a number of "miracles" and then explained to the audience how they were done.

Premanand first produced a shivalingam from his mouth, chewed bits of a glass bulb, converted water to honey and dust to sindoor. He explained that the shivalingam trick requires just a little practice with smaller objects. Anyone can eat glass provided they have good teeth without cavities and take the precaution of eating bananas before and after the glass meal.

Toxic Pesticides for the Third World

DEVINDER SHARMA

The indiscriminate import of pesticides is of crucial concern to the health and even survival of our people.

In the name of aid, harmful pesticides are being dumped by the US, Britain and other developed nations in the third world. About 10,000 people die every year and another 375,000 become victims of pesticide poisoning in the poor countries. Multinationals and the Western governments in cooperation with local elites share social responsibility for spreading the poison.

A study conducted by the British Agro-Chemicals Association for Oxfam shows that 30% of US pesticide exports in 1976 were of chemicals whose use was banned in the US itself. One such chemical - machete - is being widely used in India for the control of paddy weeds. Britain is manufacturing 11 dangerous pesticides, which are not meant for use within the country.

The pesticides destroy the ecology and over time the pests develop resistance to the chemicals. But what may be most damaging is the extent to which the pesticides are entering our bodies. DDT, BHC and other chlorinated hydrocarbons are highly stable and once they get in the food chain they remain until they end up in the human body. A study jointly conducted by WHO and UNEP shows that the ingestion of chlorinated insecticides is higher in Indians than among people of other countries. A majority of 320 autopsy samples of hu-

The most popular trick was the creation of holy ash from thin air. Premanand waves his palm around and jumps off the stage and starts distributing holy ash. The trick is done by concealing small sticks of ash between the thumb and the forefinger.

The most spectacular feat was the walk on fire. The fire had been lit two hours earlier so there would be an even bed of live embers. The performers first walked across the embers and invited the audience to join in. Many people did. The skin can withstand high temperatures for three seconds and this fact is at the root of this "miracle." The trick is to walk over the embers quickly but without haste.

One disconcerting thing to Padma Prakash was that at least some people simply thought that Premanand was another holy man, capable of magical feats.

The second group's presentation was more serious and less spectacular. The audience was told about misused and misdirected science, about how the very basis of adivasis' lives was being torn apart because of socio-political moves in the name of science. Anti-war posters were displayed, as were solar cookers.

The solar cookers were very popular; many questions were asked. Hemant Gole, a people's science activist from Pune, answered them thoroughly. One question, though, stumped him: "So I can cook the lunch on this. How about dinner?"

One criticism was that very little material was meant specifically for women. Even the solar cooker was treated as a technical novelty rather than as an innovation that could change lifestyles, especially those of women.

"I can't claim that the Vidnyan Yatra has drastically changed people's attitudes, but it has made a very good beginning in that direction," said Arun Deshpande, an organizer. "Our best response has been in places where locally organized activity has been high."

(from the Indian Express)

man fat, collected from various centers in India, were found to contain insecticide residues. In addition, raw food items such as wheat, pulses, rice, groundnut, fish, meat and butter also showed good amount of residues.

Scientists at the Industrial Toxicology Research Center and Queen Mary's Hospital for Women, Lucknow, have noticed significant levels of chlorinated hydrocarbon derivatives in human placental tissues and umbilical cord blood.

Much of the fault also lies with the third world countries for not formulating appropriate regulations to weed out unsafe pesticides. In the absence of stringent measures, multinational corporations find it easy to breed corruption among scientists and farm officials. Who then is interested in enforcing control for the use and abuse of pesticides?

(from the Indian Express)

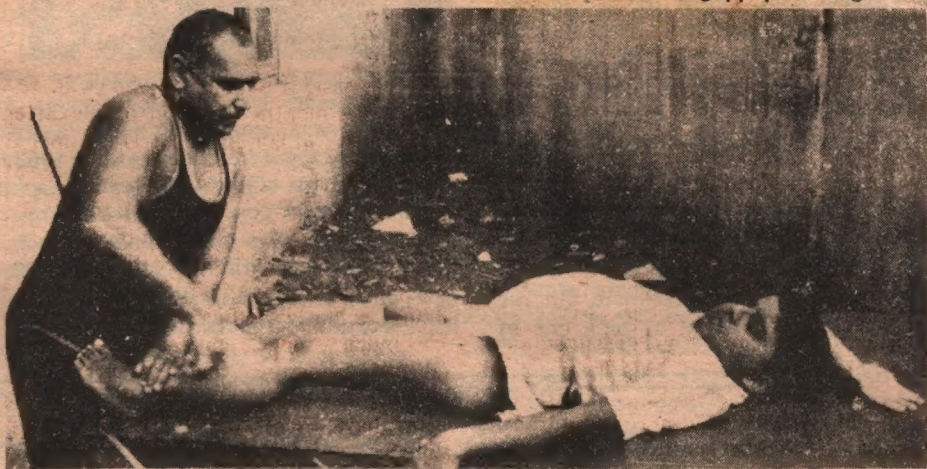
Oxfam Charges Exploitation by Drug Multinationals

Multinational drug companies are systematically exploiting people in India and other third world countries for commercial profit, according to Oxfam, the London-based charity.

Accusing such companies of "dangerous double standards," Oxfam says in a book just published that they were acting irresponsibly in the third world by ignoring the needs of the majority and not taking responsibility for the safe use of their products. Profitable but inessential drugs were being marketed by them.

Fast becoming a legend, Yeshwant Raoji Jadhav, a jawan in Bangalore, has magic in his fingers, as hundreds of polio and paralysis victims are being cured through his massage and exercises.

A seven-year-old boy hobbles in. His left leg is in an emaciated state and dangles like a stick from his hip. Otherwise the boy is all right. Jadhav offers pranam to the shrivelled leg and applies lard to the limb. His forefinger probes the skin and detecting the right nerve, squeezes. The kid howls. Again Jadhav offers pranam and rings a bell. The boy scrambles away and joins the teeming crowd at the Parade Grounds on Mahatma Gandhi Road.



Jhadav massaging a patient. -India Today

Jadhav comes from a poor family in Sangli district in Maharashtra. He studied upto the fourth standard and started working as a laborer at the age of twelve. It was then that he learned from a holy man the art of curing polio and paralysis. According to Jadhav, the guru laid down 21 conditions that bound Jadhav to secrecy about the guru's name, prohibited him from practicing till the guru died, not to accept even a glass of water from his patients, and not to teach the art until Jadhav was himself 55 and his disciple 15, and further to insure that the disciple did not practice till Jadhav died.

Jadhav tried to cure someone only after the guru died in 1973. He was posted in Jammu then and he came across a four-year-old polio victim. Jadhav says, "The child could sit in 40 days, walk with help by the 80th day, walk on its own in 110 days, and run by the end of 120 days."

Since then, Jadhav, who is now 39, has been freed of his daily duties so he can attend to patients. He has so far treated 10,255 persons. He is currently treating 1,259 with 10,000 more on a waiting list. The treatment lasts 19 days to six months.

Jadhav explains his treatment by reasoning that the simplest way to get crippled parts moving again is to reactivate the blood flow. So he moves his fingers over the affected joints to find out where exactly the blood flow has stopped. He

then uses pork oil, which reportedly has a warming effect, and massages the areas where there is no blood circulation. It is this precise and sustained massage that appears to make his patients better. He is particular that his patients visit him every day and exercise for at least three hours a day in the sun.

The patients come from all over India. Those interviewed by the Indian Express and India Today were mostly enthusiastic. Dr Rameshwar Dayal of Delhi brought his three-year-old son to Jadhav as a last try and is impressed by the tremendous improvement.

Patange Sreenivasa Rao, a small businessman in Siriguppa, brought his

daughter Sangeetha, whose left leg was three inches shorter than her right leg. Rao says of his five-year-old: "My daughter could not walk a distance without collapsing. Her left kneecap was invisible. Now she can do 1,500 sit-stands and can run a furlong. The 'doctor' has actually made the leg grow longer, he is a god."

Dr S. Chittalia of Bombay about his 12-year-old Abbas: "Not only has my son discarded his calipers but his left leg which was shorter than his right is now growing and his limp is reduced."

Kiran Khaitan's six-year-old daughter, Nithi, had crippled legs and was taken to top specialists including in London and Paris but with no effect. She started walking after Jadhav treated her.

If Jadhav was less rigid about not teaching his craft to anyone else for another 16 years and about insisting that his disciple wait till Jadhav dies, perhaps many thousand more polio cases could be cured. But Jadhav expresses the fear that if he violates his oath to his guru, he himself will lose the powers of healing.

At the same time, the medical establishment has shown no interest in studying Jadhav's methods. A neurologist at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, located in Bangalore itself, told India Today: "It is scientifically difficult to explain such phenomena but we have not taken up a study on him as yet although we have read about success."

Science March in Kerala

In November, the Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad concluded a Sastra Kala jatha - scientific culture march - that went on for 37 days through the length of the state. More than 400 villages were visited and small open-air shows put up.

The purpose of the performances was to promote scientific thinking among the people. Popular folk art forms were used to deliver the message.

A musical was based on a Brecht play on the importance of learning. A play

Anabolic steroids were promoted as appetite stimulants for malnourished children. An anti-diarrheal drug banned in Britain because of possible crippling side effects was freely marketed in the third world and sold without warning. Antibiotics were sold on market stalls like loose sweets.

The book, Bitter Pills, is written by Diana Melrose drawing on her own field research in India, North Yemen and Bangladesh, evidence from manufacturers involved, and Oxfam's experience in 85 third world countries.

called Vishom dealt with pollution, the legal system and the educational system. Chavuttunadakam, a folk art popular among Christians, was used to criticize New Delhi's import policy and unscientific measures in agriculture.

KSSP is an independent organization founded more than 20 years ago by some popular science writers. Today it is a major organization publishing books and journals - five monthly magazines, including one for children. KSSP claims to have 350 units working in villages.

KSSP has an association with CPM. An active member, M.P. Parameswaran, is also the manager of Desabhimani, a CPM publication. Criticism is generally directed at New Delhi, imperialism of the western variety, and the Kerala state government when it is not ruled by CPM. However, on specific issues, KSSP has taken positions opposed to CPM, most notably the Silent Valley Project, which was being pushed by the CPM-led Left Democratic Front government.

(based on Sreedhar Pillai's report in India Today)

Arrest of a Naxalite:

High Court Says TN Police Lied

34

Jeevakan, an alleged Naxalite.

According to the petition, Jeevakan had sent a letter to the chief minister stating that he was falsely implicated in a criminal case. Jeevakan's brother engaged an advocate, K.V.Sankaran, to arrange for Jeevakan's surrender to the police. Jeevakan came to Madras on September 22, 1981, and spent the night in his advocate's office.

Next morning, a posse of policemen descended on the office and took Jeevakan away. No warrant was produced. When an advocate went to the local police station, the officer on duty said he knew nothing.

The Inspector of Police, Kaveripattinam (Dharmapuri district), said in an affidavit that Jeevakan was arrested on September 29 at 10 PM at Kottavoor; jewelry worth Rs 30,000 was found on him.

After examining the witnesses, the Madras High Court judges said it was clear that Jeevakan was arrested from the advocate's office on September 23.

Haryana Court Frees Persons Accused of Killing Student Leader

On September 7, 1982, the Punjab High Court overturned the convictions stemming from the murder of a popular student leader, Prithipal Randhawa, in 1979. The South Asia Students Association in Vancouver told our correspondent that the decision was related to Akali politics.

Randhawa led the Punjab Student Union for a decade. He was active in fighting for a better education system and for democratic rights.

The evidence of the inspector was nothing but a fabrication, they added.

The court did not however release Jeevakan.

MISSING NAXALITE

The same judges directed the government to order an inquiry into the disappearance of Machakkalai, a Naxalite, from police custody in July 1981.

Hari, a freelance journalist, had filed a habeas corpus petition for the production of Machakkalai, who hails from Ramanaikapuram.

According to the petition, Machakkalai was taken to the top of a hill, tortured to death and his body burnt to destroy evidence.

THANNASI DIES IN FALL

Thannasi, a Naxalite who was released six months back on parole after many years in jail, died on December 3 from a fall into a well near his house at Eramanaickanpatti near Palani. It is reported that he suffered a seizure and fell in, unable to keep his balance. Thannasi started having fits and seizures during his long imprisonment, allegedly as a result of police torture.

During the night of July 18, 1979, Randhawa was kidnapped from his home in Ludhiana, allegedly by some goons from the Punjab Agricultural University. Randhawa was tortured for several hours and killed. The body was found on a road near Ludhiana. It is alleged that two Akali leaders, Nirlep Kaur and Prihlad Singh, were behind the torture-murder.

In the subsequent trial, the accused were convicted by a sessions court and sentenced to life imprisonment. Now they are free.

Bullets, Not Bread

XAVIER DIAS

Chandil is a major agricultural producing area of Singhbhum District, Bihar. Today the area is dry, the land thirsty, and the people are on the verge of a famine.

POLICE FIRE ON PEACEFUL DEMO

On October 21, the police fired on a peaceful demonstration outside the Ichagarh Block Office, about 60 miles from Jamshedpur, killing 2 student leaders and injuring many. The villagers and students numbering about 500 had assembled at the Block Office to submit a memorandum of demands to the Block Development Officer (BDO) and the Circle Officer (CO). They had announced their program a week earlier. Their demands were: declare the area as drought affected since 80% of the monsoon crop has been destroyed due to the failure of the rains; implement the Minimum Wages Act in different government schemes, in the quarries and various stone crushing fac-

tories; implement the unemployment grant scheme; speed up the grant of Caste, Income and Displacement Certificates by the BDO for which the villagers have to pay a heavy bribe; abolish the illegal toll system in the weekly bazar.

The BDO and the CO met the leaders of the demonstration. It was pointed out that the Bihar Government had last year abolished the bazar toll system by a notification but many contractors in league with government officials still collect the tax. Since this comes under the CO's charge, the villagers approached him.

LEADERS KILLED BY GUARDS

When the CO refused to meet their demands, one of the villagers caught him by his beard; there was a scuffle. A peon of the CO, it is said, ordered the guards to fire. The first bullet killed Ajit Mahato, the 22-year-old leader of the demonstration. The crowd dispersed but the guards continued to fire. Another bullet hit Dhananjay Mahato as he was mounting his bicycle; he succumbed to the second bullet in his stomach. Sarveshwa Mahato,

The next day the police refused to give permission for carrying the dead body in a procession. However the dead body was allowed to pass in a car on condition that slogans would not be raised. The body then passed wrapped in a red flag to silent but raised fist salutes from 8,000 people. At the evening public meeting, the audience of over 10,000 people observed a 2-minute silence. The state IFTU president, V.Krishnaiah, said that in Andhra and in other places too, the ruling class and CPM were taking recourse to murders to save their decreasing influence and their increasing distance from the people. CPM did not gain anything from the previous murder of Guruvaiiah in Nellore town itself. This murder will not yield them anything. They did not

Five Tortured by Contractor

Relative of Bihar Minister

Five men were allegedly branded with iron and whipped on the night of November 17 at Barahiya in Bihar by a contractor related to a state minister. The police were reportedly busy attending on another minister who was visiting the area.

The five - four poor Bhoomihars including a 60-year-old - were picked up from five places by the musclemen of the contractor, Ramakant Singh. Their mouths and rectums were stuffed with chili powder. Their hands were placed under the legs of a wooden cot and their tormentors danced on it. They were hit with gun barrels.

The reason for the torture was the alleged theft of clothes of the daughter of the contractor. She is married to the nephew of Rajo Singh, minister of state in Mishra's cabinet.

Lakhan, the 60-year-old, was the first to be picked up. He is a night guard in the unrecognized Chand-Pakil High School set up by the contractor. He has not been paid for six months.

Lakhan's son Awadesh was the next to be picked up. Awadesh works as a peon in the school with no pay. He says he paid Rs 4,000 as bribe to the "malik" who assured him that he would become a government employee once the school was recognized.

The police told reporters that there was no question of any pressure. The inspector did say that he had received a telegram from Rajo Singh asking him to take a special interest in the theft case. According to the local Cong(I) MLA who exposed the story, a telegram from the state capital wanted the police to treat the tortured men as the accused in the theft case.

who was running away, was hit by four bullets in his right shoulder and hand. He was later arrested from the Ichagarh Block Hospital and taken to the Saraikella Jail where the jailor, seeing his condition, refused to admit him. The police admitted him in the Sakshi Hospital where he lay chained to his bed. Many more were injured but, for fear of being arrested, they are in hiding.

The local MLA, Ganshan Mahato, has accused the CO of planting false evidence to prove that the demonstration was unruly. The ASI who was present did not even think it necessary to use his revolver.

Now the villagers are furious. Over 1000 villagers and students led by Nirmal Mahato, a Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) leader, look out a black flag procession in Chandil. Non-Congress(I) parties joined in a condolence meeting. Shibu Soren, JMM MP, together with other JMM MLAs, has threatened to go on a hunger-strike at the Patna Assembly gate demanding an immediate judicial inquiry into the various firings on tribals in the Jharkhand area. (from Frontier)

achieve anything by a similar murder of Palagudu Krishna in Narsampet Tq of Warangal district a few years earlier. If anything it only led to their local leader, Omkar (MLA), not even being able to enter his own constituency.

Krishnaiah said the murder had been committed with a view to stopping the growing influence of the new union and to disrupt the state conference. Recalling with tearful eyes, he said John Richard came from a poor family and had shown great qualities as a working class leader. The people can never forgive his murderers and will put an end to this politics of murder.

The meeting decided to observe August 29 as John Richard Memorial Day.

Justice Bhagwati:

"Basic Rights Have No Meaning for Poor"

Justice P.N.Bhagwati of the Supreme Court said in New Delhi on December 11 that though fundamental rights were precious and indispensable, "it is obvious that they can have absolutely no meaning for the poor, downtrodden and economically backward classes of people who unfortunately constitute the bulk of the population of India."

He was addressing a symposium organized by the Indian Federation of UNESCO Clubs on Human Rights Day.

The only solution, according to Bhagwati, would be to remake the material conditions and restructure the social and economic order so that the poor might be able to realize their economic, social and cultural rights.

Bhagwati also said it was important to look at other human rights besides the fundamental rights enshrined in part III of the Constitution. He asked if bonded labor and untouchability were not violations of human rights.

Untouchability and subjecting Harijans to cruel and inhuman treatment were in contravention of Article 7 of the international covenant on civil and political rights, he said. Bonded labor violated Article 8 of the covenant, which prescribed that no one should be held in servitude or forced to perform compulsory labor, he added.

Habib Exonerated of Charges

Professor Irfan Habib, prominent historian known for his writings about the Mughal period, has been exonerated of all the charges of alleged misconduct against him by the authorities of the Aligarh Muslim University. This was announced by Justice Pritam Singh Safeer, who was appointed by the university administration to inquire into the charges.

Habib, who is also the Dean of Faculty of Social Sciences, was suspended by the Vice-Chancellor on August 2, 1981, for alleged gross misconduct at a meeting of the deans on August 1, 1981. In his report, Justice Safeer stated that the charges against Habib by the university authorities, taken at face value, did not support the allegation of misbehavior.

Habib was reinstated early last year. He was under suspension for over 8 months despite widespread protests against the Vice-Chancellor's actions inside as well as outside the university.

A HISTORIC RALLY IN PATNA

Indian People's Front in Bihar organized a massive rally on Oct 15 in Patna. Aryabarta wrote, "More than 100,000 people assembled." Another paper Aaj wrote, "Probably this is the first time that Patna witnessed such a huge and massive rally of landless laborers and poor peasants."

Front President Ramakant Dwivedi and General Secretary Raja Ram addressed the rally and urged the people to carry on their struggles. Immediate repeal of the Press Bill, withdrawal of police forces from villages and land to the landless - these were the main demands raised by the Front. A memorandum was handed over to the chief secretary of Jagannath Mishra.

All the speakers stressed the anti-feudal struggles of the peasants and appealed to the people to support and stand by them. They said broader unity of the masses could be achieved only by taking the anti-feudal struggle as the key link. This was the main point of demarcation between and other opposition parties on the question of anti-autocratic struggles and ensuring democratic rights. Other opposition parties want some reforms in the political superstructure keeping the economic basis of autocracy intact.

(Based on an article by Anindya Bhat-tacharya in Frontier)

Trade Union Leader Murdered in Andhra

According to a report published in Vimochana, the secretary of the Motor Workers Union of Nellore in Andhra, affiliated with the Indian Federation of Trade Unions, was murdered while sleeping at night in Nellore on August 21. Neither the children sleeping beside him nor the book which the union leader had been reading before going to sleep were in the least disturbed. The TU leader, John Richard, was stabbed in the back of the neck.

John Richard, who was in his 20's, had been working enthusiastically in the union for the last two years. His job was in the checking section.

Asiad Concludes Successfully

India Finishes 5th in Medal Tally

KISHAN BAJWA

The sixteen-day ninth Asian games concluded peacefully on Dec. 4 in New Delhi. Indira Gandhi's government and organizers of the games took credit for successful arrangements and also claimed a political victory as the Akali agitation did not have much impact on the proceedings of the games.

India stood fifth in the medals tally. China topped the list, winning 61 gold, 51 silver and 43 bronze. Japan, which had won the maximum golds in the last Asiad at Bangkok, was a close second, winning 57 gold, 52 silver and 43 bronze. South Korea was third with 28 gold, 28 silver, and 37 bronze. North Korea was fourth with 17 gold, 19 silver and 21 bronze. India won 13 gold, two more than in Bangkok, 19 silver and 25 bronze. Pakistan won 3 gold, 3 silver and 5 bronze.

Indian athletes won 4 gold, 8 silver and 9 bronze. It got 3 gold, 1 silver and 1 bronze in equestrian; 2 gold and 1 silver in golf, 1 gold each in women's hockey and yachting. The other 2 gold medals came in 100 kg wrestling and heavyweight boxing.

Chand Ram got a gold in 20 Km walk, M.D. Valsamma in 400-meter hurdles for women and Charles Borromeo in the 800 meter race, all three setting new Asian records. Bahadur Singh got a medal in shot put. But the Indian athletes did not do as well as they did in the last Asiad

where they won 8 out of India's 11 gold medals.

Pakistan defeated India in the men's hockey finals 7-1. Pakistan came from behind to score an array of goals to win the title for the 6th time in succession. India went into the lead in the 4th minute through a penalty stroke by Captain Zafar Iqbal. Pakistan equalized in the 17th minute and took the lead a few minutes before half time.

TV EMPLOYEES ARRESTED

On the eve of the games, the employees of Doordarshan went on strike on a wage dispute. The government immediately banned the strike and arrested 40 of their leaders and threatened to fly in technicians from abroad to run the network. Later the employees suspended the strike and the government agreed to free their arrested leaders.

INDIA BIDDING FOR 1992 OLYMPICS

In a related development, Sports Minister Buta Singh said on Nov 22 at a press conference that India will offer to host the 1992 Olympics. The offer would be formally made at the International Olympic Committee session to be held here next March. The visiting IOC president Juan Samaranch congratulated India on the standard of its newly constructed sports facilities and said that India would be a strong candidate for 1992. 8 cities have so far offered to host the 1992 Olympics.



Indian women's hockey team doing a victory lap after winning the gold medal in the Asiad.
- Indian Express

Rapes Alleged at Asiad Village

There were 15 to 20 rapes at the Asiad village, according to the official newspaper of the Asian Games. The report was carried on December 3 but the very next day a denial by the chief administrator was printed. The paper said its earlier report had been "factually incorrect and exaggerated."

The first report said a 22-year-old Indian woman was found unconscious after being gang-raped in one of the apartments. The woman, an interpreter to an

East Asian contingent, was taken to the Asiad hospital and then taken home by her parents.

In another case, a woman guide was raped. She was bleeding profusely and admitted to a private hospital. A guide was quoted as saying that some of them quit and others were taken off late shifts.

No official statements have been made on the charges. A number of women's organizations are believed to be taking up the issue.

Behind India's Loss in Asian Hockey

EDDIE FERNANDES

India lost. What were the reasons? Plain and simple. It was total mismanagement of the team and bad selection, probably parochially oriented.

The manager and coach - Balbir - were playing the fool with the players. Once the team was selected, the first eleven should have been stabilized and provided all the necessary practice to be woven into a team. But till the last moment they were trying out the selected players in unusual positions to make fools of themselves.

Imagine Mervyn Fernandes, a regular right-in, being shifted to left-in with center-forward Jagdeep taking his place. This very center-forward, who proved his worth in the trial games, was not the same during the finals with Pakistan. It

was because he was under a psychological strain, all the time being reminded that he should not have been selected. Manager Balbir was bent on Surinder Sodhi being in the side.

FATHERS AND GODFATHERS

There were misfits in the team but they had godfathers or should I say fathers. Charanjit Kumar, who was the worst right-winger during the trial games and also in the Asiad, got in because his father Raj Kumar was one of the selectors. In our country, the son shines because of the father. What has been the trend or fad in politics has now entered our sports arena as well.

Then there were two players - Rajinder Singh as right full-back and Ranjan Negi the goalkeeper - who, though on the injured list, were somehow brought in through the back door because they also had godfathers.

Negi was a nervous wreck. After the manner in which he let in the first goal,

one saw how he was shattered. But after he blundered with the second, even the most lenient critic would have changed him. Instead, the hockey mentors took out Syed Ali, the center-forward, who was moving so well and combining beautifully with Mohammed Shahid, Zafar Iqbal and Mervyn Fernandes. How dumb can they get!

And how long did it take them to find out that Rajinder Singh was unequal to his task of holding the left sides, especially Samiullah and Hanif. Did they need 45 minutes to realize this?

The little we saw of Vineet Kumar and Manohar Topno (right back), the defense immediately checked the Pakistani scoring. The rout could have been stopped earlier and may be a different story could have been told.

Indian hockey has suffered because of politics. Our selections are never based on merit. This has a very dampening ef-

fect on players all over the country.

PAKISTAN EXCELLENT

Full marks to the Pakistan selectors and their manager and coach - once they selected their team over a month ago they drilled them as a team, playing them not in exhibition matches or on tours, but against their own second eleven.

Such was their understanding, their speed, their stickwork and technique. Their technique of dribbling right into the circle, coming down to the goal-line and then pushing into the goal with almost a feather touch was a delight to admire and praise.

This in my opinion is the greatest forward line in the last two decades with superb fitness, penetrative, technically well equipped and above all with the ability to score from any position against all defenses.

(from the Indian Express)

Textile Bonus in Tamil Nadu

(continued from page 9)

lost. Since the Kerala strike, there appears to be growing sentiment within SIMA to go back to a uniformly low bonus everywhere. The president of SIMA said, "The managements involved [in Kerala] deserve to be complimented for their fortitude in resisting pressures from the trade unions who have political backing from the highest quarter."

The state labor minister, Raghavanandam, has made strong statements supporting the mill-owners. He has cited the Bonus Act, the designation of 1982 as productivity year, and his view that "strike as a weapon to resolve industrial disputes has become obsolete and has failed." Raghavanandam said strikes caused loss of production affecting the progress of the country; so workers should think of an alternative to strikes. He was upset that even INTUC, which is Congress(I)'s union, was part of the agitation.

Non-Hindu Cadets Barred from Performing at Asiad

Mukundan C. Menon

Should all the NCC cadets presenting a folk-lore item of Kerala at the Asiad extravaganza necessarily be only Hindus? It is reported that about 20 cadets, earlier selected from different colleges, have been removed because of their being non-Hindus.

The folk-lore item, Theyyam, is a traditional dance with colored masks and costumes, performed by Harijans of Northern Kerala for festivals. About 60 were selected from the Harijan castes of Panar and Parayas.

To recruit the rest, interview letters were sent to 60 cadets of Kerala's 5 NC groups asking them to assemble at the 10-day "Theyyam training camp" held at Cannanore from Sept 19.

The 40 Hindus out of this 60 were all recruited while the 20 non-Hindus were rejected.

The aggrieved Muslim-Christian cadets, who questioned the interview

Board comprising Cmdt. Major K.N. Prabhakaran and Advocate P.V. Balakrishnan, were told that the decision was taken in accordance with "instructions from above." One of the camp trainers, however, told them they were removed for being non-Hindus.

The expelled non-Hindu cadets complained that they had reached the Can-

nanore camp after getting through 6 selection tests during the last 2 years.

One wishes that the authorities had laid down their unsecular conditions right from the start which could have avoided trouble for the rejected cadets belonging to minority communities.

(from Frontier)

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